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Digital Edition

Dezerland Action Park Orlando opens with indoor fun, museum

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO — After nearly three years of preparation, **Dezerland Action Park Orlando** opened to the public on December 14, 2020. The park, which occupies more than 800,000 square feet in the former Artegon Marketplace/Festival Bay Mall, is located on the north end of International Drive in the heart of Orlando's tourist corridor. The new park is currently operating under a soft opening model, which includes six of the 12+ planned, pay attractions; however, admission and parking are free.

The attractions currently included in the soft opening include: Arcade Orlando, Bowling Orlando, Jump Start, The Pinball Palace and The Orlando Auto Museum.

Arcade Orlando is home to over 300 redemption, skill, rhythm, nostalgia, classic pinball, toddler riding games and video games. Many of which were acquired from the now defunct **Sega Republic** park (**Dubai Mall**, UAE), which operated from 2009-2017.

Bowling Orlando is a 12-lane boutique bowling experience with exciting lighting, large screen projection televisions, and full bar and restaurant service.

Jump Start has 20,000 square feet of fun, adventure and excitement including trampoline courts, dodge ball, super slam basketball and three rooms to host private parties.

The Pinball Palace features over 150 pinball games from manufacturers such as **Data East**, **Gottlieb**, **Bally**, **Sega**, **Stern**, and **Williams**.

Dezerland Action Park Orlando occupies more than 800,000 square feet in the former Artegon Marketplace/Festival Bay Mall at the north end of Orlando's International Drive.
AT/DAVID FAKE



The Pinball Palace provides historic information about the games along with a tracking house of world records for the players.

Karting Orlando is a two-track racing experience in state-of-the-art electric go-karts manufactured by **BIZ Karts**, a British go-kart manufacturing company in operation since 1994 in London England, and operating a Florida division serving the United States, Canada and Mexico markets since 2017. Karting Orlando's two tracks include the Pro Track, which at 1,500 feet is the longest indoor go-kart track in Florida and reserved for racers over 58 inches in height, and the Cadet Track, a shorter track (500 feet) reserved for racers over 48 inches in height.

The Orlando Auto Museum is Orlando's largest museum of any kind and home to the Dezer Collection. It is also the largest and most engaging private collection of automobiles/vehicles in the



U.S. When fully open, will feature over 18 organized groupings of vehicles including Cars of the Stars, the Bat Cave, Cuba Libre and Main Street USA, and the Military Pavilion, just to name a few.

The Orlando Auto Museum is any auto enthusiast's dream, because not only can guests view the vehicles, they can also buy them, as some of the museum's highest quality classic and collector cars are also for sale.

There are approximately 2000 vehicles in the collection. There are about 130 of those vehicles displayed throughout the park, outside of the actual museum, where there is no charge to view the vehicles. Highlights of the collection include several Aston Martins

valued at approximately \$6.5 million and multiple Bat Mobiles from the television show and an array of the movie franchises.

Sure to be a favorite, and possibly the biggest draw to the museum, will be the James Bond Exhibit and Lounge, which is nearing completion. When open, the exhibit will house the world's largest collection of James Bond memorabilia. The exhibit and lounge will include a full-size Russian tank and jet, as well as feature the two 1964 Aston Martin DB5s, which remains the most iconic and recognizable of the Bond vehicles. These originals made their first appearance in the film *Goldfinger*; one of those in the collection is a custom, one-of-a-kind stunt model, tricked out with Bond effects, including disguised, retractable machine guns, a flipping license plate, and smokescreen capabilities.

"The majority of the vehicles in the collection, includ-

ing the tank, are fully operational if you give them gas and a battery. Of course, we need to keep them that way so there's no potential short or electric spark," says **Sebastian Mochkovsky**, co-owner of Dezerland, along with the park's and collection's namesake and curator, **Michael Dezer**.

Dezer, an Israeli immigrant, came to the U.S. in 1962 and worked in advertising while he attended night school before creating his own typesetting business. He then began investing in New York City real estate and founded Dezer Properties. In the 1980s, Dezer purchased several oceanfront lots in Miami and developed over a billion dollars in properties. Dezer has had a lifelong affinity for automobiles and motor vehicles, spurred by the purchase of a Vespa at age 16.

In 2012 Dezer opened **The Miami Auto Museum** at the

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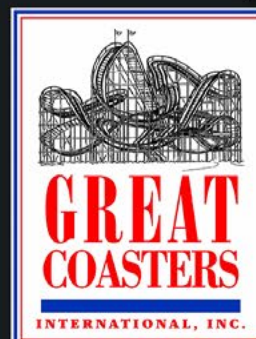
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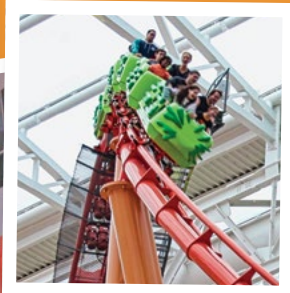
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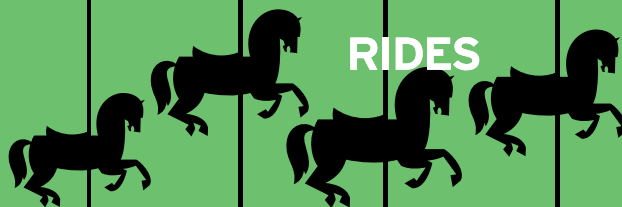
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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

AT NOTEBOOK: John W.C. Robinson, jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

One year later...



Robinson

It's hard to believe it's been a year since everything seemed to get turned on its ear. I still remember my flight home from New Orleans, after attending Amusement Expo 2020, and distributing our *Amusement Today's* March 2020 issue. By the time my plane had landed, Disneyland announced it's closure, Dollywood had canceled its media day, and local FECs had started to announce their own temporary closure. Admittedly, I was full of hope and thought all this would be over in a matter of weeks. Not the first time in my life I've been wrong.

However, I was right about something. When I got home, I wrote a column for AT's April 2020 issue regarding the pandemic. I wrote with great confidence that our industry, though stunned, would survive this sudden change because this industry has not only always adapted, but it has also always come together — as a family — when needed. Looking back on the past year, that's exactly what happened.

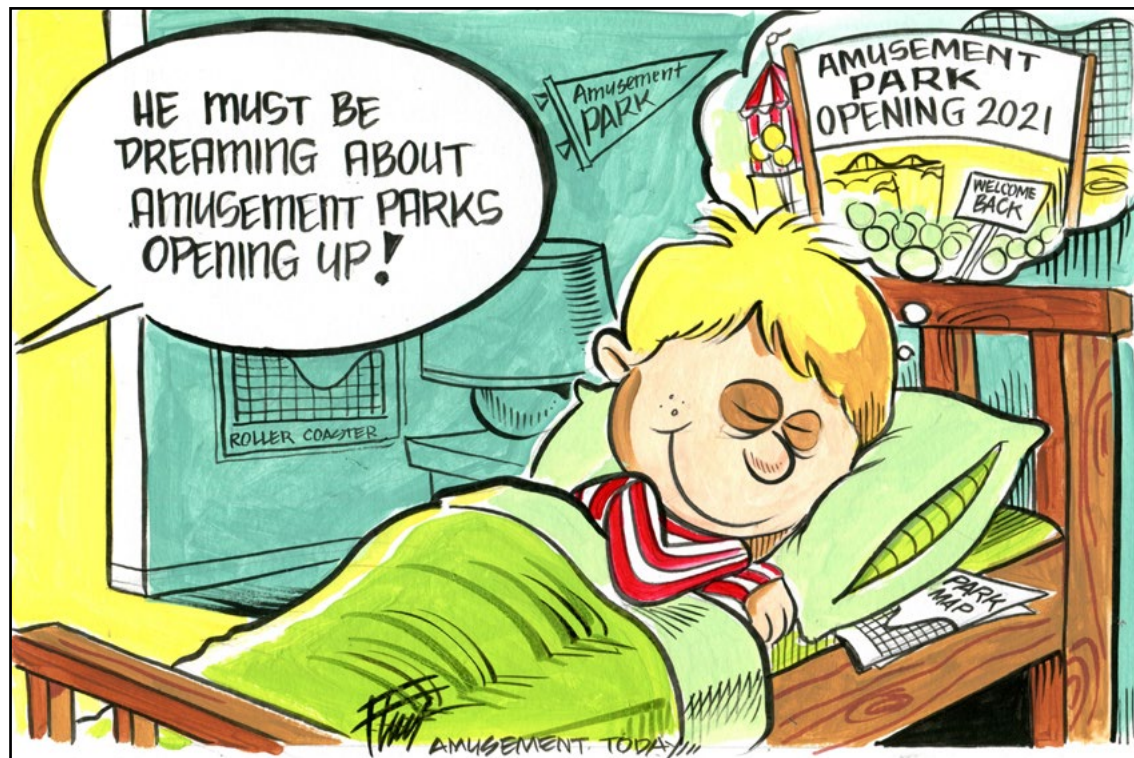
IAAPA has worked with the federal government to help get financial aid programs for the attractions industry. NEAAPA worked with local governments to help get area parks open for guests, including finally achieving the green light to open attractions in the state of New York (see *story, page 46*). Suppliers developed new products and techniques to help attractions maintain sanitary conditions. Parks shared knowledge with their competitors to help prepare them for the hurdles of opening within a pandemic.

Most recently, major theme parks are working with local governments to become mass vaccination sites and help distribute the COVID-19 vaccine to the populace (see *story, page 44*). In essence, parks are working to ensure their guests are ready to spin the turnstiles again in 2021.

Even though we're nearing the light at the end of the tunnel, the struggle is not over. The outdoor and traveling amusement industry continues to battle fair cancellations, postponements and downsizing. The state of New Mexico has offered no information for the opening of any kind of family amusement facility (indoor or outdoor), while still greenlighting the opening of local gyms and strip bars (see *story, page 36*). There is still much ahead to accomplish.

I could not be prouder of our industry. Facing a struggle that no one saw coming, repeatedly we've worked together to pave the way for hope, opportunity and the return of family fun.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY VOICE: Jonah Sandler, owner, Scene75 Entertainment Centers

An equal and opposite reaction

Newton's Third Law of Motion relates to the physical interaction of two objects. But I often contemplate the essence of this law in connection with many other aspects of my life. As relates to Scene75 Entertainment, I tell my teammates that it is not only our immediate action or decision that we must evaluate, but also, it is the ensuing — often unintended — consequences that require deep deliberation.

As managers and leaders, it is our duty to determine the latent consequences of our decisions. And then, once identified (always in part and never in full), it is on us to determine if we believe that the intended course of action still remains the appropriate path to pursue.

As the pandemic tore through our world, I wondered if our government leaders truly contemplated the unintended consequences of their decisions in advance of adopting them. Many of us suffered through a continuum of seemingly arbitrary rules based on limited, or at best unexplained, supporting data. While I unequivocally support the safety of all, did our leaders think through the equal and opposite reactions of their actions? Was the



Sandler

rationale behind their decisions explained well enough to the public to earn buy-in?

In Ohio, our four Scene75 locations were closed by government mandate last March, a scenario similar to what many of us experienced across the country. When the mandate was ultimately lifted, it was replaced with a government imposed 10 p.m. curfew. Did the local government,

in making this decision, fully evaluate the hidden consequences of trying to force people into staying home at night? First hand, on an hour-by-hour basis leading up to the curfew, I saw more congestion, more traffic, more crowds in multiple kind of establishments and even more guests at times in venues like ours, due to the condensed hours of operation. And as the curfew hour approached, a mass exodus which lead to immense social distancing challenges.

As we look back at 2020 and try to rebuild, if and where able, what will we most remember? For me, it will forever remind me that for each action or decision we make, there is almost always a consequence or reaction lurking. To be better leaders, we must evaluate the hidden as much as, if not more so than, the obvious.

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columnist(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.



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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Sara Paz, Embed

Decisive. Intense. Strategist. High-energy. Leader. When looking for words to describe **Sara Paz**, these are just a few. As CMO of **Embed**, a worldwide leader of the integrated cashless business management systems and solutions for the family entertainment and amusement/attractions industries, Sara brings a history of award-winning marketing results to the company and shares each success with her team. She was honored by *Industry Era* magazine with the distinction of "10 Best CMOs of 2020." Her sense of adventure and love of life spill over into her career making her one to watch in the industry.

Title: Chief Marketing Officer.

Number of years in the industry: 3.

Best thing about the industry:

The people! We're in the business of fun, and nobody's having more fun than us "transforming fun" via the combination of technology and the creative application thereof.

Favorite amusement ride: Formula Rossa roller coaster in Ferrari World in Abu Dhabi; it's currently the fastest in the world. Mind-blowing! It's the ultimate adult amusement ride.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ... I've always worked for companies in industries I respect and admire, making the world a better place with their products and services. So, if I wasn't working in this industry, I'd be working for another company/industry with products and services that are working toward the greater good to make the world a better place.

Biggest challenge facing our industry:

Accelerating business recovery after the pandemic, which requires increasing consumer confidence about safety in order to capture the share of wallet of re-emerging consumers.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is ... It's as close to returning to my childhood as possible; the waterslides, splashing and frolicking in the water, the fresh summertime fare, popsicles here, icicles there... pure American apple pie childhood goodness!

All-time favorite meal: Mexican food.

The first thing I do in the morning is ...

Hug my dogs, who love nothing more than a morning snuggle, and then I center my day with a 15-minute meditation, followed by exercise.

The coolest view I have ever seen from an airplane would have to be ... When I lived in Finland, I flew from Helsinki to New York City, and the route always went over the Arctic Circle. The pilot would alert us of the stunning scenery below: the icy tundra, the turquoise-blue water lapping onto the shelves of frozen seaside cliffs.

If you could have three movies in your collection, what would they be?

The Godfather I, II, and III.



Embed's Sara Paz often displays her sense of adventure as well as a love of life and what it offers. COURTESY EMBED

I always need help with ... Everything! I might have a vision and strategy, but without my team to execute it, I'm nothing. They make me look better than I deserve.

What do you notice first when meeting someone? The frequency of their energy.

If you could invite one famous person to dinner, who would it be? Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand. The way she navigated a terrorist attack on her country and the pandemic... brilliant leadership! She's authentic and down-to-earth.

The store I find myself in most often is ... The RealReal. I like great deals!

My favorite time of day is ... Morning. It's a fresh start to a new day.

The last thing I lost was ... We stay in humble budget hotels frequented by traveling families. I left a \$20 bill in the pocket of workout shorts I washed at the hotel laundry room. I so hope that finding the \$20 made the day of a family traveling on a tight budget.

On a Saturday evening, you can usually find me ... Spending quality time with friends, dining and dancing.

Season that describes your personality: Spring.

The household chore I really don't mind doing is ... Cleaning. I love cleaning and keeping my home and life tidy. It's the quickest way to feel a sense of accomplishment.

Are you a planner or a spontaneous kind of person? Planner.

If you could change places with anyone for a day who would it be? Anyone at a spa vacation getting amazing treatment after treatment!

Go-to cocktail: Smoked whiskey sours.

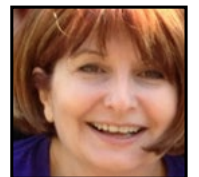
THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Snowtime thrills



FAIRFIELD, Ohio — With record snowfalls hitting the country, *Amusement Today's* John Robinson and some young friends wanted to enjoy some sledding. However, the surprise snowfall and COVID-19 shutdown had sled availability in very short supply. Zebec Watersports of Fairfield, Ohio, came through in a pinch to deliver the fun. The company supplied Robinson with multiple clear, slick water slide tubes which coasted along the sledding hills perfectly for a day of fun. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

Reflections ON FUN



AT: Lottie Minick

Primates and peacocks

In 1987 my husband, **Bob Minick**, took over **Lion Country Safari** in Atlanta. He coordinated the park's primates with **Terry Maple** of the **Atlanta Zoo** who'd recently appeared on *The Tonight show with Johnny Carson*.

The crowning glory of the borrowed primates Terry offered Bob was a magnificent black and white, lion-tailed macaque name Egbert. Egbert was handsome, smart and loved messing with our guests, especially the smartly dressed ladies with their grandchildren. Bob had a special round habitat built for Egbert that was close to guest relations.

The primate quickly realized the more politically correct he was not, the more attention he got. And the guest relations staff had to put up with many complaints. Looking back, I realize we let Egbert get away with far too many indiscretions.

One day, Bob was giving a tour of the park to an Atlanta dignitary who knew Terry Maple when they heard screaming towards Egbert's habitat. The primate had been entertaining his audience when he ran toward Bob with a baby peacock in each hand and smiled with baby peacock feathers sticking out of his mouth. Soon after, Terry came and took him back to the zoo.

We missed Egbert, but we always remembered him and think of him still when we see peacocks.

Lottie Minick is a 46-year attractions industry veteran and co-owner of Dallas-based Minick Associates, a design firm founded by her late husband, Bob. Her monthly column features behind-the-scenes anecdotes of her own and from those who have worked in the business. Got a fun industry story? Email minickassociates@gmail.com.

►ORLANDO

Continued from page 1

Dezer Collection to house and display the collection he had amassed. He followed the opening of the museum with a second South Florida attraction he called “Dezerland” in 2018.

It was also in 2018 that Dezer purchased the Artegon Marketplace/Festival Bay Mall property and began the process of relocating the Miami Auto Museum to Orlando, to open as The Orlando Auto Museum, the centerpiece for his second Dezerland Park.

It was during this time that Dezer was introduced to Mochkovsky, the CEO of **Sacoa USA**, a division of **Sacoa**, the leading FEC operator in Argentina for over 60 years. Mochkovsky’s intention was to discuss the Sacoa Cashless System with Dezer.

The pitch? Sacoa Cashless System, which the FEC operator developed in the early 1990s as a means to improve ROI and create added control for their business, was the first to use a read-only magnetic stripe card to operate instead of cash or tokens. The company now has 1900 debit card systems installed worldwide, and Sacoa is recognized as the global leader in Cashless Management Systems for the amusement entertainment and leisure industries. Sacoa Cashless System could provide the same ROI and control to Dezerland that it did for its own FECs.

Mochkovsky walked away with much — a co-owner/investor’s stake in Dezerland and a showroom for the product.

After multiple hurdles, setbacks and a pandemic, the park was finally given the go ahead to open in the fall of 2020. However, there was another problem. The model for the business was designed around



Dezerland Orlando Owners (l to r) Sebastian Mochkovsky, Maria Mochkovsky, and Michael Dezer pose in front of Captain Nemo’s custom “Caddy” from the motion picture *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (above left). Karting Orlando’s electric go-karts are supplied by BIZ Karts, a British go-kart manufacturing company in operation since 1994 (above right). COURTESY DEZERLAND



an expected 78 million people landing in the Orlando airport each year. But thanks to the pandemic, that 78 million was closer to three or four million.

As Mochkovsky put it, “That number, it’s a doozy now. With only three or four million coming into the airport, and [every Orlando attraction] trying to get their portion of the pie, do we still try to open with what we have? That’s where we are, and we chose ‘yes!’ The good thing is both partners are wealthy and have other investments, so we can keep rolling,” said Mochkovsky. “Of course, no one wants to *lose* money. But we can wait a little bit more. We will soon begin marketing to the surrounding states, and we have the momentum of Spring Break that is coming right now. We’ll let everybody know that we’re open.”

Even so, all one needs to do is spend some time with Mochkovsky to realize that this venture is more than just

two “wealthy” businessmen in an investment partnership they hope will be profitable. And then there is Dezer who said in an interview, “I’m a kid at heart. When I was born in Israel, we didn’t have these kinds of park and arcades. I am making up for what I didn’t do when I was a young kid.”

Yes, in this case, this is more than just an investment opportunity, it’s two extremely passionate businessmen who have a stake in their lifelong passions. And with the momentum that kind of determination creates, you realize they *will* make this work, and nothing will stop them.

That is why Mochkovsky and Dezer have chosen to soft open without every attraction ready to go. They have already created some 150 jobs, and when fully open, that number will be closer to 350. At that time, fully open and operating smoothly, is when they will have their grand opening.

The attractions still in

the planning, design and/or construction stages are: Hello Park, A Quick Escape, Axecelsior, VR Orlando Coaster, Replay Lounge, UVR Orlando, a meeting/event division, laser tag, as well as several amusement rides.

Hello Park will be a revolutionary multimedia playground for fantasy, creativity and hands-on exploration in a world of unique technology and captivating projections made possible through augmented reality and projection mapping. Designed to be a fascinating adventure for both children and parents, the family attraction will transform each week revealing adventures in oceans, jungles, space and other worlds.

A Quick Escape will be the future home to a series of immersive five-minute escape rooms including such titles as Space Ranger, Pirate’s Cove, Bunker 57, Area 51 and Wizards of Wormbly.

Axecelsior is a cutting-

edge axe throwing experience.

VR Orlando Coaster will offer a drone-enhanced roller coaster ride through Orlando.

Replay Lounge, an ultimate social gaming venue, will be home to billiards, shuffleboard tables, foosball tables, air hockey, steel-tip darts, electronic darts, bocce ball, ping pong, classic pinball, and wall-size projection TVs.

UVR Orlando is an experience that will bring virtual reality experiences to life.

“...and this is not finished with what you see here,” said Mochkovsky. “We have already purchased bumper cars from the closed Sega Republic park [Dubai Mall, UAE, 2009-2017] and are planning an indoor roller coaster and drop shaft, but [Dezer and I] decided to step off of the accelerator and see if we need to put in another \$1.5 million now or over the next few years. So, we will see how things go with what’s here and then decide from there.”

•dezerlandpark.com



The Orlando Auto Museum is the largest private collection of vehicles in the U.S. In the collection are some 2,000 vehicles, including many “Cars of the Stars” like The Mystery Machine (above left), the Batmobile (above middle), and the world’s largest collection of James Bond vehicles including a full-size jet, tank (above right) and multiple Aston Martins. AT/DAVID FAKE

PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Fire at Castaway Cove — page 11 / Clementon Park on the auction block — page 13

Extensive restoration in progress on century-old PTC carousel

Six Flags St. Louis invests in refurbishing beloved park attraction

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

EUREKA, Mo. — Since the close of the 2019 season, **Six Flags St. Louis** has not operated its carousel. But for a good reason. The Grand Ole Carousel is receiving some welcome tender loving care.

Built in 1915 by the **Philadelphia Toboggan Company** (today known as **Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters, Inc.**), the cherished attraction at the park was actually built more than 55 years before the Six Flags park even opened. Over time, it has had four homes. Its previous three locations were all in Ohio, the first of which was Cleveland's **Luna Park**. Following a fire in 1929, Luna Park shuttered its gates, and the carousel found a new owner, **Puritas Springs Park**. Once that park closed in 1958, the ride was acquired by **Sandy Beach Park** (later to be called **Indian Lake Park**). The carousel operated there until 1971, the year Six Flags Over Mid-America opened its gates. Today, the park goes by Six Flags St. Louis — and celebrates its 50th anniversary this season — but even though it is the oldest ride in age, it didn't join the lineup of attractions in Missouri until 1972.

"The carousel is an icon for our industry, the heart of a park if you will, and people are drawn to it for many reasons," Park President **Phil Liggett** told *Amusement Today*. "It may be because it was their very first ride experience as a child, because they rode it on a first date or now take their kids or grandchildren to ride one; but of all the rides in our park, guests stop and watch the carousel the most. Our carousel is over 100 years old. It is unique,

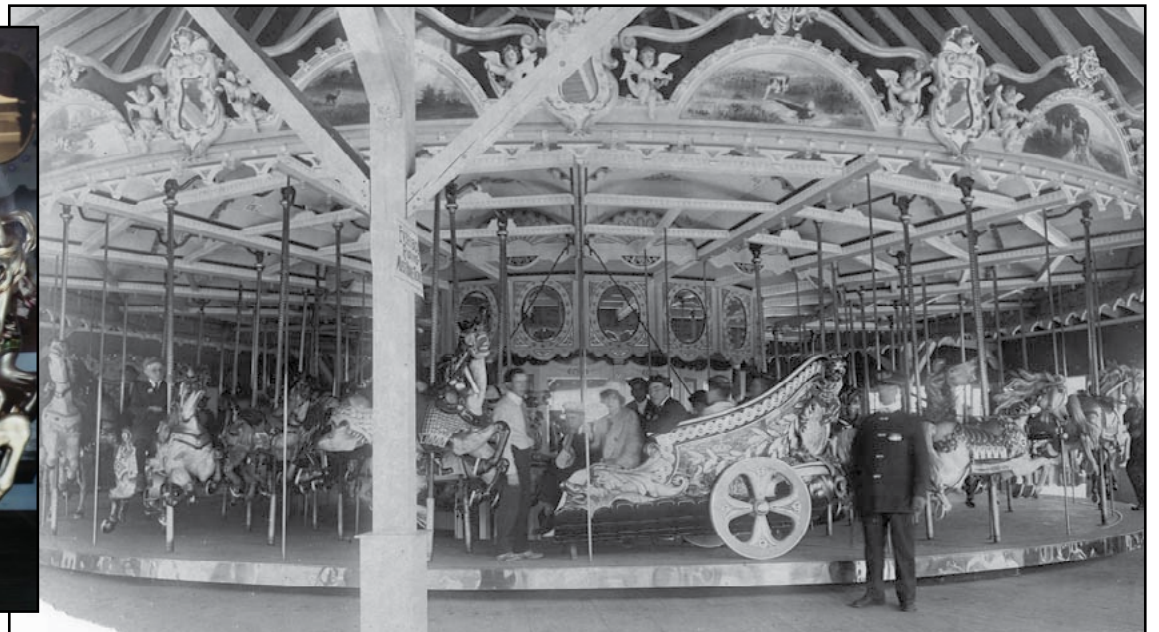


and we are so looking forward to sharing the transformation and restored beauty of this ride with our guests when it is completed."

"This decision was a result of us wanting to do it for a long time," said Public Relations Manager **Elizabeth Gotway**. "It's a beautiful carousel, and so many guests remember it from coming as kids. It's something as a park that we had been wanting to do, but when you have so many rides, you have to decide what to refurbish. But this was the carousel's time; we made the decision not to just repair and touch up but to completely strip the horses and do a full restoration."

Helping guests to be patient, Six Flags has installed an exhibit out front to see the restoration work in progress. The first horse to be completed can be viewed in beautiful detail.

"The display really makes a difference," said Gotway. "We've gotten good responses from the guests. It's very hard to have it down, especially if it is your favorite ride, and we understand that, but



Built in 1915, the carousel's first home was Luna Park in Ohio. Seen here in 1972, the horse named **Vanessa** and the entire carousel was restored for its debut at Six Flags (inset). Below is **Vanessa** today after receiving the color blocking phase of its restoration. COURTESY SIX FLAGS

as our seasons get longer and longer, rehab plans are shorter and shorter. People can't wait to see it."

The decision to not open the carousel until the project was completely finished was made rather than simply doing it in phases with some horses removed. While loyal guests do have to be patient, the debut will be done in grand fashion. A staggered approach would have even lengthened the process, and the park felt it would not have done the restoration justice.

In this transformation process, the park has decided to give each horse a name, creating an identity for each one. The name **Abel** was given to the first horse on display as a nod to what the park is "able" to accomplish.

Restoring each figure is a painstaking process. In the display, park visitors can see what the horse "**Abel**" looked like beforehand and then the dra-



matic results of the restoration process. The carousel's history is also part of the display.

"The display does such a complete job of showing what's really going on — how intricate it is, how detailed it is, how much work it is," said Gotway. "There's just such an appreciation for it. While they can't ride it, they can see him and imagine what the carousel is going to look like when it is done."

The process is painstaking. Each horse is stripped of paint, sanded, and then

receives coats of primer, feather fill, base coat and then color blocking. Six horses are in the restoration process at a time. Workers are doing all the outside horses first, which they find are the most difficult. Outside horses are larger and have more intricate detail. Those who are overseeing the restoration have the privilege of naming each horse.

"The most rewarding part of this project is taking each

► See **CAROUSEL**, page 8

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Moser Revolving Tower



Steve Read leads his team in the painstaking restoration of intricate detail (above left). Megan Rhoads uses her artistic skills to begin applying color (above right). COURTESY SIX FLAGS

►CAROUSEL

Continued from page 7

horse and studying its detail, imagining what the carver's vision was over 100 years ago and then bringing that detail back to full life," said **Steve Read**, craftsman and head carver. "Even though wood carving is a hobby of mine, I am learning more with each horse, and I am so proud to be a part of something that people will enjoy for the next 100-plus years."

"Each one of these horses is very different, a unique and individual project with its own story and background," said **Megan Rhoads**, artist. "I love being able to tell each horse's story through the detailing, color and styling. And I love that a child will come to ride the carousel and be drawn to a particular horse because of that."

"It gets multiple feather coats and then sanded and then multiple base coats," said Gotway. "You have to get it smooth. We have people ask us if it is fiberglass because it is so smooth. This is a long, long process."

Rhoads gets to decide what color the horses will be. The color of the base coat is determined by the final color choice for the horse. For example, "Nelson" received a chestnut finish. For him, the base coat was orange. Airbrushing blends all the colors together. Detailing follows, then the ornamentation.

"Each horse is going to tell its own story," Gotway told AT. "I've been at the park since I was 16. I've been around it for 39 years, and I've never seen it like this."

Tom Rebbie, owner of PTCI, finds pride in the park taking care of the company's carousel. "I'm ecstatic about it," he told AT. "There are numerous parks out there that have PTC carousels and have taken good care of them. I'm always happy to see something being restored that's old or antique, especially when it's older than me. I know Six Flags St. Louis loves that carousel. I could tell during my last visit there that it was well loved by the park."

Of note, Six Flags St. Louis has another historic connection

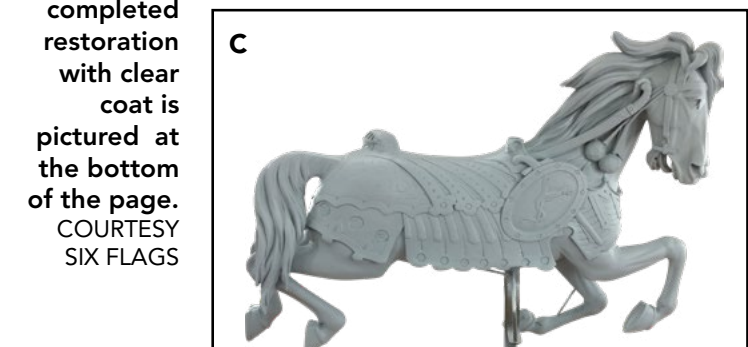
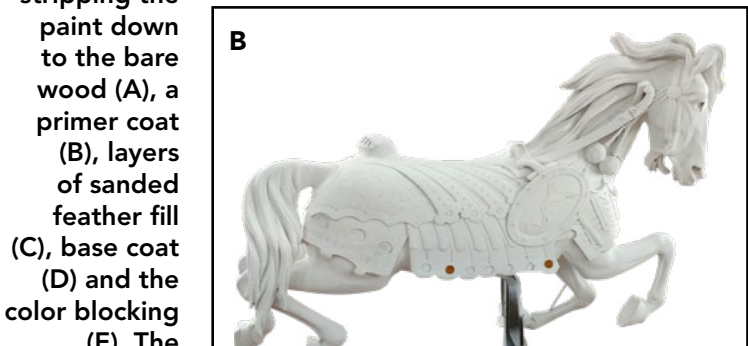
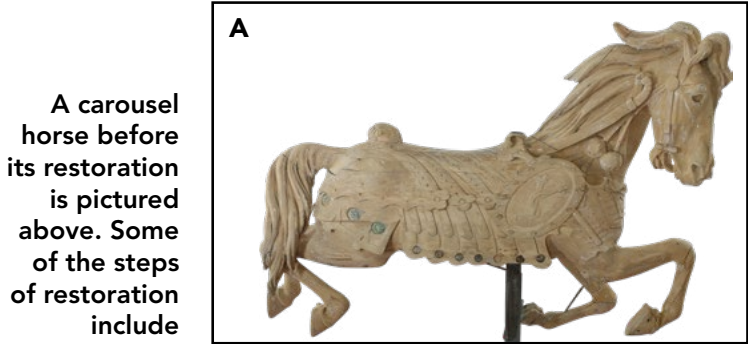
with Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters as the park's famous Screamin' Eagle roller coaster was PTC's final coaster from designer **John Allen**, said to be his very favorite. The wooden coaster was built in 1976.

Under the list of attractions on the park's website, interested fans can click on the Grand Ole Carousel and be directed to updated information as the process continues.

The exterior and the panels of the carousel will also receive the full treatment. The process is such a labor of love, the project is expected to take two to three years.

"Working on the carousel is something completely different than anything I have ever done before," said **Jeremy Farrell**, mechanic technician. "Seeing the sheer craftsmanship in each horse and watching the detail come back before your very eyes is really amazing."

"It's interesting how the carousel has really stood the test of time. It stays popular. Different kinds of roller coasters come and go, but the carousel is timeless," said Gotway. "It really is an icon of our industry."





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S&S adding air launch coaster at Changsha Window of the World

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

CHANGSHA, Hunan, China — **Window of the World** is the largest theme park in central China and is the most important base of travel, film, television, culture and entertainment in the area. Changsha Window of the World was established in 1997 and contains around 50 replicas of the most famous tourist attractions in the world in its park.

Utah-based **S&S-Sansei Technologies** has been tasked to deliver the property's newest draw. The park had already worked with S&S previously on an installation of a double tower. Now, the company will be supplying its fifth Air Launch Coaster to China.

"The park has gone through a plan of renovation," said **Preston Perkes**, executive director of administration, S&S. "This particular site had a coaster that was removed, and our

The compact nature of this S&S Air Launch Coaster will add to the excitement. Top speed surpasses 60 mph. Three inversions are taken along close to 2,800 feet of track.
COURTESY S&S WORLDWIDE



► See S&S, page 10

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►S&S

Continued from page 9

coaster will not be the only addition to this [renovated section], but it is the last one to go in. They went through a process of contract signing, and our ride was slated to be the last one installed."

The new coaster will be the anchor ride for the renovated area.

"It's situated on a hill-top in a very forested area," noted Perkes. "You'll be able to see the ride from quite far, particularly the top hat element that follows the launch. It will bring people up to it. When you get right next to an Air Launch Coaster, people see just how exhilarating it is."

With a maximum height of more than 131 feet and a track length just over 2,723 feet, the coaster will include 10 exciting elements with multiple inversions launching at a max speed of 60 mph. The new coaster at Window of the World will be the first Air Launch Coaster in China by S&S to have inversions.

"One of the reasons

they came to us is because they wanted an Air Launch Coaster," said Perkes. "Before this contract was signed, we had built and installed three large-scale Air Launch Coasters in China and a fourth in the works. They were able to see those coasters and experience them. They came to us wanting [that experience] but told us they didn't have a lot of space to work with. That led us to be a little bit creative. We put a lot in a small space."

The designer of the ride is **Joe Draves of Ride Centerline**. He feels this new coaster will be the coolest and one of the most dynamic attractions at the property.

"It was a small footprint and [the park management] wanted more maneuvers," he told *Amusement Today*. "They wanted a multi-loop-er this time around."

The compact nature of the ride creates several close clearances that coaster fans are sure to love. Following the launch, the layout rises into an upright top hat element. Following that maneuver, the intertwined layout



snarls through tightly banked turns, airtime pops, three inversions and overbanked turns at exhilarating speed.

"It's a super mix of airtime, quick horizontal transitions from left to right, and some variety of inversions," said Draves. "I love the top hat element when taken right side up."

The coaster captures attention with fiery red track atop light gray supports. Trains feature four-across seating like the other S&S launched coasters in China. This ride will sport two trains. Each seats 20 passengers.

"One is a melon yellow and the other is light blue," said Perkes. "They have been delivered and are on site in storage."

The new, as-yet-unnamed coaster replaces a former loop-and-corkscrew coaster from 1999. That coaster was manufac-

tured by **Hebei Zhongye Metallurgical Equipment** and had not operated in several years.

When asked by *AT* if the extremely compact nature of this particular project provides a selling point for future installations, Perkes said, "I'd be of the opinion that every launched coaster from S&S has an extreme amount of action. There's really not a time where you can take a break — you come to the end and say, 'What just happened? I don't know what happened, but it was amazing.' Through the years we've continued to do that with the Air Launch Coasters. This one packs the punch like the others, but in this situation the launch and crazy elements are just on top of each other in a tight spot. Each of those coasters has a unique part of it; this coaster is super tight with a couple of zero-G rolls in the middle of it."

Draves laughed, "The entire ride is a spaghetti bowl in the old footprint of the looping coaster that used to be there. They wanted

it to fit that space, and we told them this is the length of launch we can give you, but we can jumble up everything else on the footers. There is significant structure sharing on it."

If not for the global pandemic, the ride would have been completed last year. Following the Lunar New Year holidays, the S&S team was not permitted to return to China and construction came to a halt. The track and structure were more than half completed. This March, construction can resume once again.

"We're going to finish it as soon as we possibly can," said Perkes. "Our team is going to have to make some sacrifices. Our employees have to quarantine 30 days before they can even enter the park. We're looking for a late summer timeframe."

"It's going to be really good. I can't wait to ride it," said Draves.

Window of the World is one of the most visited destinations in the area and is open year-round.

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Fire destroys 80-year-old building at Playland's Castaway Cove

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

OCEAN CITY, Md. — The rides at **Playland's Castaway Cove** will spin, loop, twirl and light up the night sky come March 26, 2021. That is a certainty, said **Brian Hartley**, park vice president.

But, he admits, there are still many unknowns since the four-alarm fire on January 30 destroyed the park's boardwalk building that housed the park's arcade, offices and two separate restaurant rentals.

As of mid-February, the **Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives (ATF)** had determined that the cause of the fire was accidental and had started near the front of the arcade. Hartley said they had two security cameras on that specific area



Castaway Cove's marquee building had become an icon along the boardwalk (above left). An official investigation revealed that the four-alarm fire on January 30, 2021, was accidental. COURTESY PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, CAPE MAY COUNTY HERALD



and the ATF was trying to re-create the recording from the scorched hard drive located in the office area to determine the exact cause.

"They are telling us that will take three to six weeks,"

Hartley said.

Meanwhile, that area is locked down so that the investigation can continue into the exact cause and so insurance companies can take care of business as well.

Park administration has set up temporary offices back in the maintenance area and they have no idea how long they will be there.

"I thought with 2020 being over, things would look up,"

Hartley said.

So far the negative impacts of 2020 has lingered into 2021. When the smoke alarm company contacted Hartley

► See FIRE, page 12

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►FIRE

Continued from page 11

at 7:50 a.m. on Saturday, January 30, he was unable to get to the property due to a positive COVID-19 test. He was quarantining and had to send other employees to the property.

By the time fire fighters were on the scene, Hartley said fire and smoke had totally engulfed the 80-foot-by-100-foot boardwalk building, which was originally built for the 1939-1940 New York World's Fair that was held in Queens, New York. The building was taken apart and reassembled on the Ocean City, Maryland, boardwalk.

Hartley said the all-wooden structure burned quickly.

Lost were all Castaway Cove's games, the Skee Balls, shooting galleries, basketball games, etc. The offices were a total loss. He said much of his records he had backed up on his computer so they were saved. But the owner, **Scott Simpson**, had a lot of paper records going back many years that are now gone.

"We had a fire-proof file cabinet where we stored employee records, their applications," Hartley said. "Those were saved. It was a godsend we had those in that safe."

In addition, Hartley said they were storing ride vehicles in the building. They were from rides by **Zamperla**, a balloon ride and a helicopter ride. The main structures for the rides were still on the grounds and had been wrapped for the winter. But the vehicles in the building were a total loss.

Hartley said, fortunately, they had purchased a new helicopter ride last year from Zamperla.

"It was late getting here so we didn't set it up at all last year and it was stored in a different area," he said. "We had planned to sell the old one. That won't happen now, but we will have a new one we will set up. We have contacted Zamperla about getting new vehicles for the balloon ride."

Also a total loss was the iconic pirate's ship that sat atop the structure of the building. At this point, no plans have been drawn up for a new building, but Hartley said the pirate ship will be back.

"We were really surprised at how many people really loved that ship," he said. "We have actually found an old set of ship plans. An engineer

with the original company that designed the ship found a copy at his office from 20 years ago."

When facing the original building, there were four large garage-type doors along the front. The far left door was the front to the **Dairy Queen** and the far right was to **Ham-burger Construction**. The center two were the main park entrances and arcade. Hartley said the Dairy Queen will be back, but the owners of Ham-burger Construction have not made a decision yet.

Hartley said they have had initial conversations with the City of Ocean City planning and zoning committees. But first things first.

"We have to be able to get back onto the property and begin demolition," he said. "We need to get the architects, engineers and contractors."

There is a secondary entrance into the park. That will become the main gate when the park opens in 2021. There may be a couple of rides not opening at the beginning of the 2021 season, because of their location to the fire area. However, that is still an unknown.

Hartley said they are all thankful for the great work by the firefighters that fought the blaze that morning.

"They really did a great job in keeping the fire from spreading to other buildings," he said. "There are buildings to our north and to our south. There was some water damage, but none of them had fire damage. There is only six inches of air space between the walls of our building and the others."

With the arch of Castaway Cove's building, it was taller than the adjacent buildings.

"We may not build another arch, however," he said. "We are looking at maybe an A-frame or a flat roof."

Hartley said they are also thankful that no one was in the building at the time the fire started.

"We are in here all year long, working Monday through Friday," he said.

No one had yet to arrive that morning.

Hartley said he has since tested negative for COVID-19. But in the first week of February when the weather turned colder, he ended up taking a spill on ice down his back stairs.

"I'm fine," he said.

He just wants 2020 to really and truly be over.

Park Post-its



AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Belgium's amusement parks are considering an appeal to the Council of State against a decision taken by the Consultative Committee last month to keep their doors closed while allowing zoos to reopen.

Speaking on behalf of members of the **Association of Belgian Amusement Parks, Belgoparks**, **Plopsa Group CEO Steve Van den Kerkhof**, described the decision to a local news agency as unfair and regretted the fact that there were no prospects for the reopening of their businesses.

"We cannot understand why animal parks are allowed to open, but not amusement parks," Van den Kerkhof said. "We expected equal treatment."

Belgian amusement parks also want to know when they can expect to be allowed to reopen stressing the fact the parks need time to prepare for reopening.

It is the beginning of a new chapter for **Jungle Island** in Watson Island, Florida, with plans to transform the attraction that will include a new resort hotel and an eco-adventure theme park are underway. Plans also include a lazy river, bungee experience and a zip line, underway.

Another big change for the park is that there no longer will be large mammals on exhibit. All are being relocated to rescue reserves.

The approval of a zoning change by the Miami City Commission last month brought the plans closer to fruition. It will have to go through the commission for a second reading but it is expected to be approved then as well.

The trademark parrots, macaws, exotic birds and smaller animals like the lemurs will still call Jungle Island home, but the redesigned park will be much more about the resort experience. The lynch pin of the new project is the new 300-room, 12-story hotel.

Developers said the evolution of Jungle Island is in tune with a rapidly growing Miami.

If everything stays on target, Phase 1 of the new Jungle Island is expected to open in the winter of 2022 and the hotel should be done by 2025.

Disney World will still require visitors to wear facial coverings even if they are vaccinated from the coronavirus, the theme park said in a safety rules update.

Disney's policy falls in line with the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's** recommendation that people should keep wearing masks and maintain social distance after they receive the vaccines.

"Not enough information is currently available to say if or when CDC will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the

spread of the virus that causes COVID-19," the CDC's website said. "Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide in real-world conditions before making that decision."

Universal Orlando Resort also plans to keep mask rules in place at its parks.

Since reopening in July, the Disney World theme parks have required masks and regularly evolved their safety rules whether it was to ban neck gaiters or not allow visitors to eat or drink while standing in certain ride lines. The company has previously said it's keeping a 35% attendance cap to limit crowds. In **Orange County**, the coronavirus remains a health concern.

Officials from the **Blank Park Zoo**, Des Moines, Iowa, announced the opening of the **Holmes Foster Event Center**, which will be home to educational activities, conservation programming, recreational events and private gatherings such as business meetings, weddings and reunions.

The \$2.2 million, 10,000-square-foot building replaces the tent-like ZooPlex, which had exceeded its lifespan. The new building is temperature controlled, has a speaker prep area, bride and groom suites, AV, Wi-Fi and a catering kitchen. It also adds additional restroom facilities to that area of the Zoo.

This winter, the zoo is offering winter activities including a nine-hole, mini-golf experience in the new event space. The mini-golf course is set up to ensure social distancing of groups and is free with regular admission.

There also are self-guided education activities and a snack area.

The new space seats 350 at round tables or approximately 500 theater style.

The event center is named in memory of **Holmes Foster**. Holmes and wife **Marjorie Foster** are long-time supporters of Blank Park Zoo.

A new carousel is opening for riders at the **Old Sacramento Waterfront** in Sacramento, California.

The Front Street Carousel joins the Waterfront Wheel as entertainment attractions along the waterfront.

The carousel has 30 horses and two sleighs. Riders must be at least three feet tall and if children are under that height, they can still ride if an adult is standing with them, holding on as they ride.

People must be at least 42 inches tall to ride the Waterfront Wheel.

For COVID-19 safety precautions, the middle horses will be closed on the carousel, leaving only the outside and inside animals available to ride. Employees will also disinfect high-touch surfaces on the carousel, like the restraints and horses, after each ride.

Delgrosso's Amusement Park, Tipton, Pennsylvania, announced that it plans to reopen this summer for the 74th season. The park was closed last summer due to the pandemic. Last month, the board of directors decided to move forward with opening the amusement park and water park this year.

Delgrosso's plans to safely reopen all of the rides and attractions on Memorial Day weekend. But park officials say they can't do it without an amazing staff.

The park is looking to fill about 250 jobs. Director of Marketing **Amy Mearkle** stated that the park is currently looking for to fill positions in food service, ride operation, and lifeguards.



Clementon Park, opened in 1907, will be up for auction on March 23. The entire property could go to a sole buyer to reopen the property, or the assets could be sold individually. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Clementon Park and Splash World attractions go up for auction March 23

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

CLEMENTON, N.J. — Having opened in 1907, **Clementon Park** has more than a century of history. Its next chapter might admittedly be its last. The last 25 years have delivered challenges to the park, one of which was a 1998 incident on a roller coaster since retired that seemed to place the park under incredible scrutiny. Combine that with a revolving door of owners and management, and the park seemed to lose the support of the local community. The most recent owner, **Premier Park, LLC**, closed the park abruptly in the fall of 2019 before the season had actually ended.

Clementon Park was one of the rare remaining trolley parks. This historic group was noted for being built at the ends of trolley lines. Amusement parks built in such locations encouraged ridership on the weekends. The park is 30 miles from downtown Philadelphia.

Shuttered for the last 15 months, the park and its assets will be going up for auction on March 23. Connecticut-based **Capital Recovery Group** will be conducting the auction. It is listed as "Sale by Order of Howard Samuels – Receiver."

"We are actively seeking a buyer for this iconic park located outside of Philadelphia and expect significant interest in the auction," said CRG President **Bill Firestone**.

Interested parties are sure to find numerous items of interest. In addition to

the park's 52 acres — along with its liquor license — is a 23-acre spring-fed lake from which the park gets its name. A wide range of attractions are ready to possibly find new homes. Thrill rides include a drop tower, **Larson** loop and swinging ship. Family attractions will include a Scrambler, carousel, Tilt-A-Whirl, a children's coaster and a **Chance** Ferris wheel. Several kiddie rides and a train ride are also on the block.

One of the hardest attractions to relocate would be the **Hellcat** wooden roller coaster.

Splash World was a water park included with admission to Clementon Park. Several slides and attractions from it will also be available.

In addition to rides, the listing states: "All park furnishings and support equipment including over 300 assorted configuration picnic tables with attached benches, food prep and concession equipment, maintenance equipment and much more."

"There is such heartfelt feeling to see the park continue,"

Firestone told *Amusement Today*. "It has harbored such great memories in the community. The heart is there, the question is if the financing will follow."

This will be the first opportunity for a sole buyer since CRG became involved. Firestone feels it is the last chance for such an opportunity to happen.

"We would love to see someone maximize its value here," said Firestone. "We are certainly available for inspections and to answer questions and to make anyone feel comfortable in the auction process. We'd love to see a successful sale where the park is kept operating."

The park's liquor license, while a part of the property, could be sold to someone elsewhere subject to the approval of the Alcohol Commission of New Jersey.

An inspection is set for Friday, March 19.

A sole bidder could reopen the park. The decision to redevelop the land would be a predictable outcome as well.



The ride assortment includes thrill rides, family rides, kiddie rides and waterslides. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Ralph S. Alberts Company unifies industry with "Teddy" Alberts



In a typical year, the customer service staff at **Ralph S. Alberts Company** would be on the road visiting park maintenance personnel, as they install new padding for the upcoming season. Travel restrictions and COVID-19 related directives have put a halt to park visits. The company has embarked on an effort to bring the industry together. A plush **Theodore S. Alberts (Teddy)** is being added to shipments of foam parts to parks all over the world. Amusement park maintenance team members are encouraged to take pictures at ride locations with Teddy as a stand-in for the Alberts team. All photos can be submitted to the company by emailing them to teddy@rsalberts.com. Photos of Teddy at the parks will be shared with *Amusement Today* and on **Ralph S. Alberts'** social media to aid in bringing our close-knit industry, separated by a pandemic, closer together again. COURTESY RALPH S. ALBERTS COMPANY

Parks prepare to celebrate Roller Coaster Appreciation

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — The second annual **World Roller Coaster Appreciation Month** was recently selected for inclusion in *Chase's Calendar of Events 2021*. Presented by **American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE)**, the month-long event will highlight the engineering, architecture, history, entertainment and marvels of roller coasters in June 2021.

"For many years, ACE has wanted to create special celebration about our favorite amusement ride: the roller coaster," stated **Robert Ulrich**, president, ACE. "We are excited to honor roller coasters around the world. Roller Coaster Appreciation Month is the perfect way for us to include our annual ACE Coaster Con event, too."

In addition to Coaster Con — scheduled to be hosted by **Hersheypark, Dorney Park, Dutch Wonderland** and **Knoebels Amusement Resort** — parks across the globe will be hosting events to celebrate the popular thrill rides.

Furthering education and awareness of the amusement attractions, multiple roller coaster history displays will be available in public buildings and speakers will be scheduling both virtual and in-person presentations on a variety of topics related to roller coasters.

"Roller coasters and amusement parks are at the heart of family vacations and the special memories we all have," said **National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives (NRCMA)** Board Member **Pete Owens**. "Celebrating the roller coaster is like reliving all of those childhood and parenthood memories."

•aceonline.org



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The expansive Hologate World entertainment center will feature immersive entertainment paired with unique food, beverage and bar service. COURTESY HOLOGATE

Hologate World unveiled in Germany

MUNICH, Germany — In early February, **Hologate** revealed the latest evolution of its business when it broke ground on the state-of-the-art, more-than-13,000-square-foot immersive **Hologate World** entertainment facility. In recent years, Hologate has emerged as one of the industry leaders in immersive, location-based entertainment.

Scheduled to open in September of 2021, Hologate World will be promoted as the largest "extended-reality" entertainment space in Germany. In addition to a bar, food service lounge



and indoor/outdoor gathering areas, Hologate World will feature the latest of Hologate's virtual reality systems, extended reality escape rooms and a competitive esports arena. In addition, several proprietary entertainment experiences will be premiering at the opening.

"We are very excited to be partnering with **P&P Group** on this game-changing project," said **Leif Petersen**, Hologate CEO and founder. "With the introduction and inclusion of fresh, never-before-seen, immersive entertainment options, alongside our Arena and Blitz systems, and all within a large, socially-focused, fun-for-everyone space, Hologate World presents the next level of immersive location-based entertainment for Hologate."

The flagship location will be housed at the new and modernized 194,000-square-foot **Flair** urban marketplace in Fürth, Germany. This entertainment anchor and destination, located in the heart of the city, will also serve as a blueprint for further franchise locations looking for a modern entertainment facility to get people off their couches and back into their retail and hospitality locations.

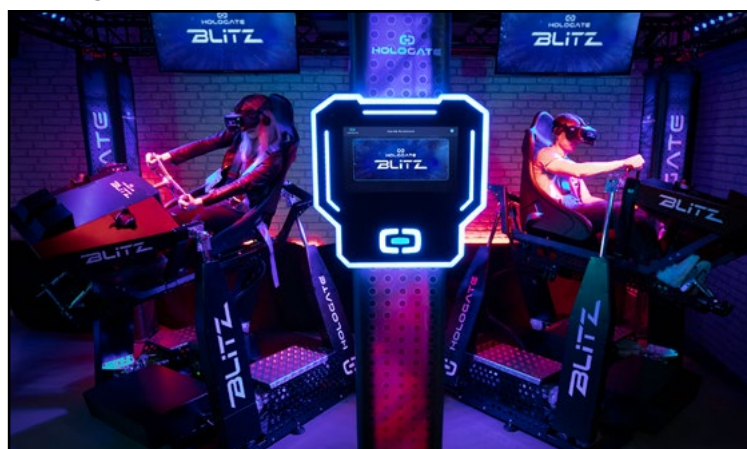
"Our goal with Flair is to create a dynamic social experience and to generate maximum attendance through the numerous offers," stated **Michael Peter**, P&P Group CEO and owner. "With Hologate World, we have found [the ultimate entertainment highlight] and can thus offer a new, incomparable attraction that is globally one of a kind."

Hologate World, is built around Hologate's industry adopted hygiene and safety standards and offers a facility that caters to small groups for social safe fun with friends and family.

• flair-fuerth.de
• hologate.com



Hologate's Arena (above) and Blitz (below) virtual reality systems will be the centerpieces of the FEC's entertainment offerings. COURTESY HOLOGATE



Land of Dinosaurs adds Sunkid family tower ride



MOSCOW, Russia — Integrated into the theming of Dream Island's Land of the Dinosaurs, an interactive tower from Sunkid has been added. With its treelike design, the family attraction fits perfectly into the jungle playscape. Standing 30 feet tall, the top of the attraction offers guests a fun vantage point of the surrounding area. COURTESY SUNKID

Robu Group purchases the Melbourne Star Observation Wheel

MELBOURNE, Australia — As of February 1, Swiss-based global observation wheel design and management company **Robu Group** has purchased the **Melbourne Star Observation Wheel**.

The attraction will continue operating as usual, welcoming thousands of visitors a week, with a new master plan expected to bring exciting new visitor activities and experiences — both in and around the giant observation wheel — in the near future.

Robu's CEO **Ronald A. Bussink** has been the lead designer on more than 100 observation wheels globally. On the acquisition, Bussink said: "Melbourne Star Observation Wheel is an iconic attraction for the city of Melbourne. I was already very keen before its official opening to add this [wheel] to our portfolio and to create a world-class visitor experience in line with our global expertise in city-shaping attractions."

"We saw the Melbourne Star as a unique investment opportunity, which forms part of our strategic focus on standalone tourism attractions. We are very positive and confident about the future and our new master plan will optimise operations and bring exciting new visitor activities and experiences."

"We will definitely strengthen the corporate and social responsibility of Melbourne Star and include it into our Turn for Good program to make the world a better place," concluded Bussink.

•melbournestar.com

The Robu Group has taken over ownership of the iconic Melbourne Star Observation Wheel which highlights the skyline of the popular Australian city.
COURTESY MELBOURNE STAR OBSERVATION WHEEL



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Myrtle Beach's Broadway Grand Prix adds Intercard



The management of Broadway Grand Prix celebrates the installation of the Intercard system. COURTESY INTERCARD

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Intercard completed an installation at Myrtle Beach's **Broadway Grand Prix Family Race Park**, a go-kart and arcade attraction located in the South Carolina.

Multi-unit operator **Lazarus Entertainment Group** runs Broadway Grand Prix and two water parks in the Myrtle Beach area. Visitors can play 75 great games in the park's 20,000-square-foot arcade. The facility also boasts seven go-kart tracks, a mini-golf course as well as a rock-climbing wall.

Realizing the facility's current token and ticket system was outdated, the Intercard installation is Lazarus Entertainment Group's first venture with a cashless technology system.

"We wanted to upgrade our whole arcade and bring in some new games and new attractions for our guests," said **Garrett Watts**, the FEC's director of operations. "We thought that adding a cashless system would go a long way for the ease of use for our guests, but also for our operations as well."

"I really liked the direction that Intercard was going with [its] software and the technology that [the company] is using, as well as its ability to integrate with our other POS systems. So it was an easy decision for us."

Within the next few years, Watts expects to revamp the entire park operation and consolidate all attractions into the cashless system. "The ability to incorporate the arcade, food and beverage and our outside operations into the cashless system would make our entire operation seamless as well as improve our efficiency and controls," he explained.

"Intercard's technology gives Lazarus Entertainment Group the option in the future to easily go cashless throughout Broadway Grand Prix," stated **Rachelle Granger**, Intercard North America sales rep. "Customers would be able to use the same play card for karting and food and beverage as well as games and redemption merchandise. This can promote card sales, build repeat traffic and streamline back office operations."

• intercardinc.com

FECs of New York take Cuomo to court

NEW YORK — Dozens of owners of arcades, trampoline parks, laser tag facilities and other FECs sued New York State over not being allowed to reopen amid the COVID-19 pandemic, calling the continued shutdown "arbitrary, capricious, irrational and abusive."

The lawsuit was filed February 11 with the state Supreme Court. It stated that since ordering the temporary shutdown of nonessential businesses in March, **Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo** has allowed many similar businesses — including casinos, gyms, movie theaters and bowling alleys — to reopen, while ignoring other indoor family amusement facilities.

An **Urban Air Adventure Park** franchise in Lake Grove, New York is among the 45 plaintiffs. They claimed the state had offered no guidance or plan for reopening their businesses, which have suffered significant financial losses.

"We didn't want to file a lawsuit. However, we need engagement. We cannot be ignored any longer," said **David Wolmetz**, co-owner of the Urban Air franchise. The filing came a day after national chain **Dave & Buster's** filed its own lawsuit against Cuomo over not being allowed to reopen.

On February 17, Gov. Cuomo stated that indoor FECs would be allowed to reopen on March 26, 2021.



FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson

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The Mayor of Ashland, Missouri, **Richard Sullivan** and **Pinball Company** CEO **Nic Parks** announced on Facebook they're working on plans for a new entertainment park near the **Columbia Regional Airport**.

"This project that Nic is working on is called **Lakeside Ashland**," stated Sullivan. "We were actually going to do this [announcement later], but it's such an exciting project and some information leaked, and we wanted it to come to the city of Ashland first."

Lakeside Ashland will be a 37-acre property with an amphitheater, small lake, miniature golf, a waterfront restaurant, and other features not yet announced.

"Some future ideas for this property... I like the idea of doing a hundred-foot Ferris wheel, outdoor ropes course, a potential zipline, you know, the sky's the limit with what type of entertainment things we can add to this facility," Parks said.

Dave & Buster's opened a new entertainment location at the Bay Park Square Mall in the state of Wisconsin.

The venue was expected to open last year, with the pandemic delaying proceedings. Precautions will be taken against COVID-19 after the opening, with visitors required to wear masks and hand sanitizing stations available.

The 27,000-square-foot location will feature arcade games, sports viewing, as well as food and beverage offerings.

An arcade bar in Arizona, helped overturn the state's 10 p.m. curfew.

The Cobra in Tucson was one of a number of businesses in Pima County to win a preliminary injunction that overturned the government's curfew order. The curfew was created in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The local superior court decided: "Because the court finds the resolution is not statutorily authorized and violates the governor's executive order and that the plaintiffs have demonstrated the possibility of harm, the court finds the plaintiffs are entitled to relief."

The list of activities expected at a new entertainment center in Wenatchee, Washington, is almost as long as the big slide that developers have in the works for **Sport Wenatchee**, too.

"It's basically a giant indoor playground for everyone," said co-owner **Taryn Harris**. Harris and her mother, **Sue Harris**, of **Sport Gymnastics**, are co-owners of the project along with local developer **Flint Hartwig** and **Wenatchee Applesox** owner **Jose Oglesby**.

The ownership group is close to finalizing a \$2 million purchase of three connected buildings from the Port of Chelan County.

The complex's attractions are set to include: rooftop pickleball courts, lounge

views of the Columbia River, batting cages, golf simulator, ninja course, climbing walls, trampolines, a sports bar and restaurant.

The 300-game **Bishop Cidercade** opened in Houston, Texas, in late January. It is the latest in a chain of cider-serving bar-arcades. The venue, which is part tasting room and part arcade is already well known in the state for its outlets that provide creative flavors of cider. There are 48 different varieties to try.

The 18,000-square-foot venue is the chain's third. The others are in Dallas, where the company is based, and Austin. The parent company is run by husband-and-wife team **Joel** and **Laura Malone**, who started home-brewing cider when they could not find one that they liked. They started the **Bishop Cider Company** in 2014.

The 300 games are accompanied by pool tables, air hockey, table football games and table tennis, darts, skeeball and dancing machines, plus local food trucks. A \$10 admission buys unlimited access to all of the games.

814 Lanes and Games is a rebranded FEC from owners **Chris** and **Bobby Hogue**. The new facility was formerly a traditional bowling center that the two brothers were intent on transforming into a full family entertainment center.

"Our goal was to capture the market within 45 minutes as the premier destination for family entertainment with first class attractions that are unique to our area," said Chris Hogue.

Creative Works collaborated with 814 Lanes and Games on three new immersive attractions: an escape room, a **Hologate** VR arena and laser tag.

814 Lanes and Games became the very first facility to install Creative Works new escape room theme, Cell Block E. The escape room experience puts participants in a challenging situation where they attempt to escape a jail cell.

For its laser tag arena, the FEC went with a post-apocalyptic theme. This theme incorporates props of large vehicles in a war-torn environment.

"Our arena is unlike any in our area...so people are blown away. There is a helicopter and a hummer coming out of our walls, so it's pretty rad," said Chris Hogue.

Nick Salfity, the creative consultant for the project, was thrilled to see the project come to life for the Hagues. "Bobby, Chris, and the rest of the team were super fun to work with. Seeing them at [the **IAAPA** Expo], Amusement 360 and just knowing how hard they worked to get this project off the ground is very rewarding to see," added Salfity.

"Creative Works has listened to our feedback and addressed anything we are uncomfortable with and adjusted ideas to fit into the concept of what we are trying to present to our customers," said Chris Hogue.

JRA aids in developing Nickelodeon's first FEC in China: Nickelodeon Playtime

CINCINNATI, Ohio — China Leisure Development Co., (CLDC) and ViacomCBS developed a Nickelodeon-themed family entertainment center located in the city of Shenzhen, China. Comprising four attraction zones, **Nickelodeon Playtime** features: *SpongeBob SquarePants*, *PAW Patrol*, *Dora the Explorer*, and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, as well as Nickelodeon-branded retail and a sit-down play café. The 16,000-square-foot FEC is now open at Shenzhen OCT **Happy Harbour**.

"Connecting with audiences on the ground through immersive experiences remains an integral part of Nickelodeon's global business," stated **Gerald Raines**, senior vice president of global location based experiences, for ViacomCBS.

Nickelodeon Playtime immerses guests in the worlds of these iconic properties and invites them to play alongside their favorite characters, extending the brand experience beyond screens.

Cincinnati, Ohio-based



The playful and unique Nickelodeon theming — aided in being realized by JRA — extends into Nickelodeon Playtime's colorful gift shops. COURTESY JRA

JRA was contracted to help make the FEC a reality.

"JRA was honored to work with [CLDC] and Nickelodeon on the design and development of Nickelodeon's first FEC in China," said **Colin Cronin**, senior project director at JRA.

Commenting on the opening of the \$4.6 million attraction, **Linda Dong**, President of CLDC, said: "We are thrilled to be partnering with Nickelodeon to bring their highly popular brands to life

in an FEC format. We see rapid growth in family entertainment spending in China and strong demand from shopping centers for experiential products. Nickelodeon Playtime is part of our strategy to capitalize on this trend."

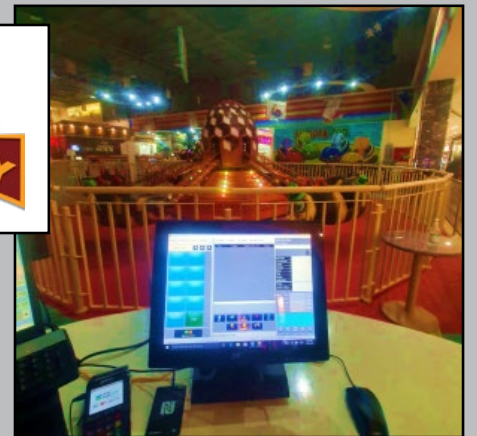
"It was a pleasure helping to bring *SpongeBob*, *Dora*, *Donatello*, *Marshall*, and their friends to life, and we hope the attraction delights visitors from Shenzhen and beyond," added Cronin.

•jackrouse.com

Happy Day migrates to Semnox system



Happy Day FEC recently adapted Semnox's Arcade Debit Card System. COURTESY SEMNOX



DUBAI, U.A.E. — **Happy Day**, a family entertainment destination, has chosen **Semnox's** Arcade Debit Card System for a comprehensive customer experience management solution for its operations. The FEC has been in operation for more than five years in Tabuk City, Saudi Arabia.

"We were struggling with reporting, CRM and gift management in our old system," said **Khalid Al-Dhakeel**, owner of Happy Day. "Semnox was our best choice. With its ease-of-use system, we are able to free our mind and focus more on our customer's needs. Semnox was able to implement and migrate the system smoothly without a downtime amidst the pandemic crisis."

"Happy Day system migration has been a good experience," said **Meghashyam J**, client manager of Semnox Solutions "With the Semnox system, they can focus on building closer relationship with their customers using multi-tiered membership and loyalty management system."

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Belle City Amusements midway popular at Hendry County Fair

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

CLEWISTON, Fla. — The **Hendry County Fair and Livestock Show** took place from February 9 through the 14 in Clewiston, Florida with an invitation to all to “Join us as we take it ‘Back in the Old Days,’” which was the fair’s 2021 theme.

Entertainment at this year’s fair was somewhat limited due to pandemic precautions, and, unfortunately, the rodeo, one of the show’s favorite events, had to be canceled. However, there was still an abundance of other favorites for which the fair is known: pageants, steers, and swine.

But pageants, livestock shows and sales are not the only reasons people are drawn to the county fair. Of course, there is also the food, and Hendry County Fair is no exception. There was plenty to eat, including such standard favorites as cotton candy, funnel cakes, kettle corn, pie, and every possible “fried (insert the indulgence of your choosing).”

The fair was honored to have **Florida Federation of Fairs and Livestock Shows’** President, **Jim Ward**, and Executive Director, **Dan West**, pay a visit to the Hendry County Fair. The visit was in keeping with the organization’s mission to “Increase the overall quality of Florida’s Agricultural Fairs and provide its members the support and guidance needed to enlighten our



A Southwest Florida sunset lights up the sky and is a beautiful complement the lights of Belle City Amusements that bring the Hendry County Fair midway to life (above left). Belle City Amusements also operated the midway for the 2020 Strawberry Festival. COURTESY BELLE CITY AMUSEMENTS; AT/DAVID FAKE

youth and educate fairgoers on the agriculture, trade, entertainment and heritage of Florida.”

Gate admission was \$6 in 2021, and the fair concluded on Valentine’s Day Sunday with a family day, which offered free admission.

Belle City Amusements, which has operated the midway for the Hendry County Fair for the past 10 years, offered pay-one-price wristbands every day of the fair. Even though there were no new rides offered in 2021, the midway offered 28 rides ranging from mild to wild, providing something fun and exciting for the entire family. Again in 2021, the Giant Wheel remained the most popular in

grosses and ridership.

Final attendance numbers and ride grosses were not yet released, but unexpectedly, the fairs preliminary stats were showing that even amidst a pandemic, fairgoers were arriving in large numbers.

Early in fares run **Charles Panacek**, President of Belle City Amusements, said that attendance was, in the least, trending toward being on par with previous years. However, Panacek stated that this was the third fair on his 2021 schedule, and if the trend that was seen at the previous two stops also held true in Clewiston, attendance could not only exceed expectations, but surpass previous records. Both the **Manatee County Fair**

and the **Charlotte County Fair** saw record attendance and ride grosses in the weeks leading up to the fair in Clewiston.

Most fairs do not have 2020 numbers with which to compare their 2021 results. However, because Florida’s fair season begins months ahead of most others, many of the Florida fairs were spared, since they occurred prior to or after the pandemic shutdowns. In fact, last year Belle City Amusements made it through a fourth fair, the **Florida Strawberry Festival**, before they experienced the first closure or cancellation.

Beyond March of 2020, however it was far from “business as usual” for the carnival operator. Like all others, Belle City Amusements struggled through months of canceled shows. They were fortunate enough to pick up

two unscheduled events last fall, the **Georgia State Fair** in Perry, Georgia and the **Florida Gateway Fair** in Lake City, Florida, last fall because the shows contracted to service those fairs were in lockdown and/or unable to travel.

“2020, it wasn’t easy. I mean, we had a lot of time off last year in the summer, in the spring in the summer and of course, early fall, but we did play two events late last fall. So, you know, we did get about four weeks’ worth of work in which helped a lot. And those events were also record attendances and record ride grosses,” said Panacek.

“We are very optimistic about the rest of this year,” said Panacek. “We are extremely glad to be out and working, and hopefully, our industry as a whole can get back to some sense of normalcy as time goes on.”

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Florida Federation of Fairs and Livestock Shows’ President, **Jim Ward** (left) and Executive Director, **Dan West** (right), visited the Hendry County Fair on February 12. Pictured between them (l to r) are: Hendry County Fair’s **Lisa Kelley**, **Yvonne Swindel**, and **Lindsay Hall**, the fair’s Manager/Treasurer, President, and Director, respectively. COURTESY HENDRY COUNTY FAIR

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MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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The new dates for the 2021 **Florida State Fair** are April 22-May 2. Originally scheduled for February 11-22, organizers decided to delay the annual event that attracts 500,000 fairgoers each year due to continuing COVID-19 mitigation.

"The Florida State Fair is truly a community event that our guests look forward to each and every year," **Cheryl Flood**, executive director of the Florida State Fair, told WFLA-TV news. "Like other fairs and venues across the country that have safely reopened, we are utilizing best practices and safety guidelines that have proven to be successful."

First held in Tampa in 1904, the Florida State Fair includes competitions, entertainment, carnival and other attractions and activities. It is one of the largest annual events in the Sunshine State.

Some **Rodeo Austin** events are being canceled as **Luedecke Arena** and other parts of the **Travis County Expo Center**, where the event has been hosted for decades, are being used for COVID-19 response. The cancellation, the second year in a row, includes the pro rodeo, carnival, fair and BBQ events that were scheduled for this month. Organizers are working with local officials to figure out which events can be rescheduled for later this year.

Only private youth competitions will be hosted this month, including the junior livestock show, Ag mechanics competition, ultimate scramble championship and the youth auction.

Always one of the top five rodeo/carnival events in the country, organizers of the **Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo** have shelved the 2021 event that was moved to May 4-23 as the pandemic continues. The junior livestock and horse show competitions will still be held in March as private events.

"While we were optimistic that moving our rodeo to May would provide a better opportunity to host our annual community event that rodeo fans have come to love and expect, unfortunately, it has become evident that the current health situation has not improved to the degree necessary to host our event," said **Chris Boleman**, president and CEO of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, in a release. "While this is an extremely heartbreaking decision for our rodeo volunteers and the larger rodeo community, we believe this decision is in the best interest of the health and well-being of our community."

2022 will be the 90th anniversary of the rodeo. No date has been set yet.

The **Nez Perce County Fair**, Lewiston, Idaho, has a new manager starting this month after the fair board voted unanimously to hire **Vanessa Schneider** to replace **Mike Orton**, who recently retired.

Schneider most recently served as the

livestock program manager for the **Alameda County Fair**, Pleasanton, California. She also contracted with various other California fairs as a livestock and data entry specialist and the exhibit department supervisor and livestock auction supervisor at the **Napa Town and Country Fair**, Napa, California.

Her extensive fair career started in 1995 as the small animal department coordinator at the Alameda County Fair.

Typically, when most fairs work with their schedules, it is to add a day or two. Such is the opposite for **McLeod County Fair**, Hutchinson, Minnesota. They are moving from a five-day fair to a four-day one, August 19-22.

According to **Casey Walters**, executive secretary/fair manager for the **McLeod County Agricultural Association**, the idea of a four-day fair had been discussed on and off for years, but never seemed to be the right fit at the time.

"Wednesday is and always has been our slowest traffic day of the fair, and as for a Wednesday evening, it's not the top choice for nights to go out," Walters said. "If someone chooses to come to the fair one or two times, it's more likely to be Friday through Sunday when the majority have some days off to enjoy it, or for a specific livestock show or event."

Organizers are now working on shifting the schedule and adjusting all the details.

Since early February, 100 people have been able to shelter indoors at the **Oregon State Fairgrounds**, Salem. Community leaders partnered with local nonprofits to provide housing in The Pavilion, a 30,504-square-foot arena floor, seating and hospitality room. Additional people are also able to use the adjacent parking lot as a vehicle camping spot.

The **Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center** has not rented any of their property for events since March of last year, instead, being used for COVID-19 testing, vaccines and wildfire relief. The recent shelter housing is run by **Church at the Park**, a program that provides homeless services at **Cascades Gateway Park**. Five staff members are on duty along with 24/7 security.

The question of how long the 150-foot-tall **SkyStar Observation Wheel** in **Golden Gate Park**, San Francisco, could stay is still being considered. The **Historic Preservation Commission** wants to allow the **Recreation and Park Department** to continue to operate the wheel until March 2025. Nearby residents are concerned about the length of time as well as environmental issues, noise and LED lighting concerns. Some feel since the wheel was only scheduled for a year, that a one-year extension would be appropriate. It only operated a total of 39 days in 2020. A decision regarding any extension time is expected soon.



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2020 European Showmen's Union report showcases concerns

AT: Pam Sherborne
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Since the beginning of the 2020 novel coronavirus pandemic, board members of the **European Showmen's Union (ESU)**, one of the oldest trade organizations in Europe, has had ongoing exchanges with representatives from other European national associations in regard to the crisis as it unfolded and continues now into 2021.

Those conversations have not presented an optimistic view of Europe's outdoor mobile amusement industry.

According to an annual report released last month by the ESU, 2020 was devastating on the industry. With cancellations to events on fairgrounds and the associated losses in revenues, "the majority of showman families are facing economic ruin."

The report states that the pandemic has "... plunged the European showman industry into its worst crisis ever. Centuries-old fairgrounds are about to disappear from the cities' cultural program forever."

Since 1954, the ESU constituent bodies, together

with the national associations, have been fighting for the future of fairgrounds and the professional interests of more than 75,000 family businesses and their 600,000 employees.

A couple of weeks before the outbreak of the pandemic last year, showman representatives from Ireland, Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Great Britain and Germany were able to meet in person for the annual **41st ESU Congress**. Board members were elected. They include, from Germany, President **Albert Ritter**; from Belgium, Vice President **Franck Delforge** and Secretary General **Steve Severeys**; from The Netherlands, Vice President **Atze J. Lubach-Koers** and Deputy Secretary General **Nina Crommelin**; from Switzerland, Vice President **Charles Senn**, and from Ireland, Vice President **Chris Piper**.

As lockdowns ensued last year, Europe's showmen experienced huge losses. As a result, thousands of showwomen and showmen demonstrated throughout Europe to draw attention to the dramatic situation afflicting their industry.

Some of those events included demonstrations in countries including The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland.

ESU members have been concerned with what they feel has been a double standard in attraction reopenings in Europe. For example, outdoor swimming pools have opened and children are allowed to sit together in the kiddie pool, "but at the same time children are not allowed to ride together on a carousel," according to the report.

ESU members have called for economic aid in the form of non-repayable funds.

Ritter: "Loans would not solve the problems, but only postpone the impending insolvencies in the European showman industry until next year," Ritter said in the report. "Never in their history have the showmen asked for support. But today, being subject to a ban on practicing their profession due to corona(virus) restrictions and having found themselves in a situation threatening their very existence through no fault of their own, economic help is urgently needed."

•debev.de

Charlotte County Fair adjusts for COVID



PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. — The 10-day Charlotte County Fair was recently held in Port Charlotte, Florida. Belle City Amusements, Deltona, Florida, had the spot bringing in 22 rides, of which six were kiddie ones. Shown is the Sky Wheel and other rides leading up to it. Belle City is one of five carnival operations across the country that operates this ride on its midway. Special ride and gate admission pricing was offered throughout the run. Three shows were offered daily with two to three offerings each day. They included Jurassic Kingdom Live!, Dinosaur Show and Cirque Mundial. There were a few changes due to COVID-19 procedures. There was no vintage car show as has been tradition. Usually, the fair hosts local student art in the expo center, where kids show off their creations decorated with ribbons. The indoor venue was closed due to social distancing concerns. A mandate to keep all buildings closed, meant the livestock barns were operated outdoors with a sunshade for animals. COURTESY STEVE O'DONNELL

The Showmen's League of America awards scholarships, looks to future

The **Showmen's League of America (SLA)** announced the organization will award 44 students with scholarships for the 2021-2022 school year. The SLA will also award two carnival schools and the SLA St. Louis Chapter with scholarships funds. The noteworthy amount of \$82,000 is similar to last year's total, which was determined before the pandemic's significant impact on the outdoor amusement business.

"Thanks to our active nationwide membership, we were able to ensure the students receive at least what they did last year," said **Lorelei Schoendienst**, co-chair of the Scholarship Committee. "So many families in our industry are suffering financially and we are glad to be in a position to give back," she continued.

Although the SLA was unable to fundraise in 2020, the most recent few years were very successful due to increased events and member participation.

The scholarship program has been the SLA's signature program since 1974. Each February, the scholarship committee meets to review each applicant. Applications are open to students who are planning to attend a two-year or four-year college or trade school. Submissions are due each year by December 31 and require a 2.75 GPA or higher and member sponsor.

Robert Thorson is serving as president of the Showmen's League of America (SLA) this



year. He is from the Chicago area, owns **Lucky Ducky Concessions** and books with his uncle, past SLA president **Bill Johnson** who owns **Fantasy Amusements**. Future incoming presidents are first Vice President **Patrick Jamieson** (**World's Finest Shows**, Ontario, Canada) and second VP **Marc Janas** (**B. Original Foods** who books with **Powers Great American Midways** and is nephew to **Debbie and Corky Powers**. Marc's father is a past president of the SLA). The third VP, **Bob Johnson** is the retired president of the **OABA**. In February, the nominating committee, chaired by two previous past presidents **Andy Schoendienst** (**Luehrs' Ideal Rides**), and **Mary Chris Smith** (retired as president of **McGowan Allied Specialty Insurance**) selected the 2022 Board of Governors and incoming 3rd VP. Although this meeting usually takes place in Tampa, it was held via a Zoom meeting this year.

Cindy Henning continues as the SLA's executive director. The SLA's long-range

planning committee recently met. Chaired by Bob Johnson and **Ron Burback**



(**Fantastic Shows**), they discussed ideas for club longevity including topics such as membership, trade show and convention, fundraising, etc. This year's committee members were chosen for their geographical location to ensure all SLA members are represented since the group is a nationwide (plus Canada) organization.

Looking ahead, SLA is aware that this will be a challenging time for its hard-working members again in 2021. SLA has kept that in mind regarding its fundraising activities. This year, SLA will have its annual Buffalo Bill bonanza raffle with the drawing held during IAAPA Expo 2021 in November. Fundraisers like this and others help support SLA's scholarship program. In 2022 and beyond, SLA hopes to continue to increase its outreach to its membership through the SLA After Dark parties which occur all over North America.

As of now, SLA is planning to have its trade show in San Antonio this year after taking 2020 off. This will be the last year in San Antonio as the **International Association of Fairs & Expositions (IAFE)** will be moving to another location for 2022.

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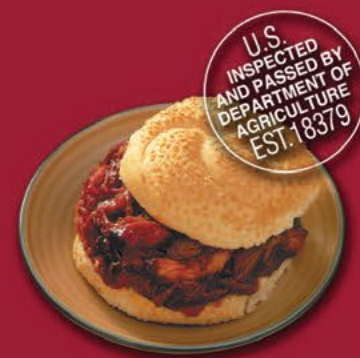


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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

► World's Largest Swimming Lesson resumes in-person education — page 28

WhiteWater West celebrates 40 years of water park excellence

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
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VANCOUVER, B.C. — **WhiteWater West**, one of the leading designers and manufacturers of water park products, is doing a year-long celebration to commemorate its 40th anniversary. WhiteWater was founded in 1980 by **Geoff Chutter**, a former accountant. Chutter saw his first waterslide at the age of 28 when conducting an audit for a park in Kelowna, B.C. Seeing the potential of this type of recreation, he decided to take the plunge, realizing that he was still young, and if it didn't work out, he could always go back to accounting.

Chutter started WhiteWater in the town of Penticton, B.C., establishing the **WhiteWater Waterslide and Recreation Complex** as one of North America's first water parks. Using the experience he gained building and running that park, Chutter started a company to share that knowledge with those who were interested in building their own parks. Now 40 years later, that company has grown to become one of the world's most recognized and largest providers of everything water park related.

Looking back on the past 40 years, Chutter, WhiteWater's founder and CEO, still remembers where it all started: "When I opened WhiteWater Waterpark in 1980, I didn't imagine we would become the industry leader it is today, and I'm humbled. Four decades later and WhiteWater is



Geoff Chutter overlooks construction of the WhiteWater Waterslide and Recreation Complex in 1980 (above left). The WhiteWater team poses at the IAAPA Expo 2019 in Orlando, Florida (above right). Amusement Today founder Gary Slade and Andrew Mowatt, WhiteWater's vice president of North American sales, pose in a fiberglass slide section while touring the manufacturing plant in 2000 (below). COURTESY WHITEWATER; AT/GARY SLADE COLLECTION



a designer and manufacturer of over 100 incredible attractions, which can be found in thousands of parks all over the world. Even after all this time, the motivation remains the same, I've always wanted to see families have safe, healthy fun together, and alongside with our clients, we continue to achieve that."

Forty years ago, waterslide manufacturers were few and far between, so WhiteWater constructed its own slides for the park in Penticton. Soon afterward, other parks came calling, and as business grew, WhiteWater acquired a fiberglass manufacturing plant and a few years later added a local engineering firm.

Throughout its first decade,

the company continued to grow. In 1987, Chutter partnered with **Andrew Wray** from **Barr & Wray North America**. Barr + Wray had established itself in the U.K. as one of the leaders in fluid handling and conditioning, providing pools and spas along with water filtration equipment, and pumps. Wray, with a degree in mechanical engineering, began designing wave generating equipment while working alongside his father at Barr + Wray. He brought the technology to Canada with his company Barr & Wray North America. By joining forces, WhiteWater was well on its way to becoming a one-stop shop for everything and anything water related. Wray became WhiteWater's chief business development officer and a key partner at WhiteWater West Industries.

Following that merger, WhiteWater continued to be on the lookout for new technology. That led WhiteWater to either acquire, form partnerships or license products from **Interactive Water Play** in 1995, **FlowRider** in 1998, **Prime Play** in 2001, and Master Blaster technology from **NBGS** in 2003. The year 2005 brought the acquisition of **SCS Interactive**, and the following year a licensing agreement was reached with **Aqualoop** to market and manufacture the world's first looping waterslides. The latest partnership, announced at the 2019 IAAPA Euro Attractions show, was a licensing deal with **wiegand.maelzer** to manufacturer



the rotating SlideWheel. The deal was later modified giving WhiteWater exclusive rights to market the product. As part of that development, **Rainer Maelzer** joined the WhiteWater team in June 2019 as a consultant.

Aside from acquiring technology, the company has developed several innovations utilizing its own talent base. In 1988 WhiteWater added in-house architectural design and master plan services. New corporate offices were opened in 1995 in Kelowna, B.C. and the following year a 90,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art manufacturing facility was added. One of the first-ever themed waterslides, **Black Hole**, was developed by WhiteWater. Opening in 1990 at **Wet'n'Wild** parks in Orlando and Arlington, Texas, the spaceship-themed slides featured black enclosed tubes with running lights, fiber optics, fog and sound effects. Introduced in 2005, **Boomerango** with its wall-climbing reverse fall has become one of the company's

favorite attractions. A decade ago, WhiteWater introduced the **MegaTube** series of waterslides including **Constrictor**, **Python**, **Viper** and **Rattler**, offering riders on rafts high banking oscillations in huge, 20-foot-diameter enclosed tubes. Taking that concept a step further is the massive **Anaconda** waterslide that has six-passenger rafts climbing the walls of a cavernous channel nearly 15 feet high. Other innovative attractions include the **AquaDuck** slide installed on the **Disney Dream** cruise ship, which featured a Master Blaster slide with clear acrylic slide sections, and **FusionFortress**, a complete all-in-one water park play structure.

At IAAPA Expo 2018, WhiteWater introduced its new **Vantage** program, which integrates technology from a variety of systems to revolutionize guest experience in a water park. The Vantage system can help guests customize their experience.

► See WHITEWATER, page 26



One of WhiteWater's most popular slides is the **Boomerango**, seen here at **Typhoon Texas Water Park** in **Katy, Texas**. AT/TIM BADLWIN



Another big seller for WhiteWater is the multi-lane mat racer such as this one at Six Flags Hurricane Harbor, Arlington, Texas. AT/TIM BALDWIN

► WHITEWATER

Continued from page 25

perience in the park by communicating through an app downloaded to their phones. Once at a park, guests sync their app to a supplied RFID wristband. A quick scan at the start of the ride then enables personalized lighting or sound choices on the slide. Depending on what services are integrated, the system can be used throughout the day to provide locker access, food and drink, and even guide the guests to certain areas of the park or alert them to shopping specials. Wireless transmitters throughout the park provide real-time data to both guests and operators.

The app also provides feedback to the park owners, and with the demographic information entered into the app, owners can determine which attractions are popular with which demographic group at certain times of the day. For instance, the Vantage system can let owners know that a certain high-thrill attraction is popular throughout the day with teenagers, but parents ride it only once at the beginning of the day. This type of real-time data, both immediate and long term, can help determine future attractions.

The latest attraction to come from WhiteWater was launched while most of the world was in a pandemic lockdown. With the popularity of surfing increasing dramatically all over the world, the time had come to produce wave pools dedicated to surfing. Although the technology has been around for decades — **Disney's Typhoon Lagoon** wave pool, installed in 1989, is able to produce surfable waves — a new product called Endless Surf,

creates a dedicated surf pool. The wave generating machine can provide an endless supply of different types of waves with instructions from a computer. Its heart-shaped pool design is scalable in size, with a maximum width of 1,000 feet in a five-acre pool. The machine can provide waves in both directions from the center of the pool, with a wave lasting up to 26 seconds from the beginning to the end of the ride. The pool can accommodate 75 surfers at a time, with waves potentially getting pumped out every eight seconds.

Although WhiteWater can provide a complete package from concept, design and construction all the way to the finished product and continued maintenance, it also works with several well-known design partners such as **Aquatic Development Group (ADG)**, **Water Technology Inc. (WTI)**, **Cloward H2O**, **JRA**, **Ramaker & Associates** and **Falcon's Creative Group**.

What started as a single water park in 1980 has grown to become a global industry powerhouse with a team of more than 600 individuals with offices in North America, Barcelona, Dubai, and China. WhiteWater has been an industry leader and innovator for decades. Its products and services can be found at thousands of venues including theme parks, cruise ships, indoor and outdoor water parks, hotels and resorts all around the world. The company has been recognized for its excellence and commitment to safety with IAAPA Brass Ring Awards, Thea Awards, Leading Edge and *Amusement Today* Golden Ticket Awards.

• whitewaterwest.com



NEWS SPLASH

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Universal Studios' Volcano Bay water park reopened on February 27 after having closed on November 2, 2020, for seasonal maintenance. It was the first seasonal closure for the park, which has operated year-round since it opened in 2017. According to Universal, the water park was closed for the season to perform annual maintenance on several attractions and areas of the park at the same time. The closure came as a surprise to many guests who had already made plans to visit during that time period.

Guests who had purchased three-park tickets or a three-park multi-day vacation and had planned to visit while the water park was closed were able to modify their purchase to a two-park ticket. Guests had the option to receive a refund or choose an in-park gift card that covered the difference plus 20%. Cabana sales and other premium add-ons were fully refunded. Three-park season pass holders were given the option to have their pass extended for an additional two months or to receive a comparable refund.

When asked if the seasonal closures would happen every year, Universal responded that any future closures would be shared on the park's website.

On February 4, 2021, **ProSlide** launched a new website design allowing ProSlide customers to see the full product portfolio in a user-friendly environment that offers improved navigation and functionality.

The new website showcases ProSlide's 35 years of innovation and its full catalog of high-performance water rides from the iconic Tornado, to the technologically advanced HydroMagnetic Water Coaster.

"Our primary goal during the redesign process was to create a more valuable, user-centric, and responsive resource across all platforms and devices," said ProSlide's Director of Global Marketing **Chantal Theoret**. "Specifically, we wanted to focus on making it easier for our visitors to learn and locate valuable information about our innovations, water rides, and services not only at their desk but on mobile devices as well."

The **Gaylord Palms Resort** in Kissimmee, Florida, has opened Crystal River Rapids, a new water attraction on March 1. It is part of the resort's \$158 million expansion, opening in phases, that will include 302 additional rooms in a new Gulf Coast Tower along with 96,000 square feet of meeting and event space. The expansion also includes a new 12,000-square-foot event area, Mangrove Lawn, which allows for unique group events that can include access to the river or the nearby South Beach Pool.

The new Crystal River Rapids action river attraction at the Cypress Springs Water Park was inspired by Florida's spring-fed rivers. It will take guests on an exhilarating ride with changing currents past roaring waterfalls and crumbling limestone walls. The new attraction also includes a state-of-the-art sound system and heated water for year-round enjoyment.

Crystal River Rapids is the key attraction

of a whole new area that includes Crystal River Refreshments — a new food venue with a grab-n-go menu featuring speciality cocktails, comfort food, flatbreads and sandwiches.

Also new to area are two heated spas with massage jets and 360-degree views of the water park. The new area includes additional private cabanas that come with a lounge area, refrigerator and flat-screen TV. Pay-extra upgraded seating is also available in the form of day beds that can accommodate two adults; exclusive sun deck chairs overlooking Crystal River Rapids; and premium pool seating that guarantees a spot with a front-row view of the pool.

Cliff Lakes water park in Cliff, North Warwickshire, England, is increasing the size of its popular floating aqua park. Originally designed to be one big attraction, restrictions during 2020 had the park divided in two. Twenty-five guests spent the first half hour of their session in half the park, and then moved over to the second half to finish the hour-long session.

The expansion will nearly double the size of the floating park and offer more challenging obstacles with more climbing structures and a 22-foot giant slide.

As scuba diving has become more popular, several underwater parks have been created to give divers something unusual to explore. In 2019, **Dive Bahrain** submerged a decommissioned **Boeing 747** aircraft.

Now, swimmers and divers in France can explore an underwater art gallery located in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Cannes, in the French Riviera. Cannes, famous for its international film festival, has long been associated with the arts. Six sculptures by British artist **Jason deCaires Taylor** have been submerged off the Cannes coast. Taylor is a British sculptor, conservationist, underwater photographer and scuba diving instructor who has installed sculpture parks off the coasts of Mexico, the Bahamas and in the Caribbean. The project in Cannes is his first in Europe and his first in the Mediterranean.

The sculptures are a series of masks, almost eight feet tall, based on ordinary local people. Each sculpture weighs between 10 to 12 tons and is made of a pH-neutral material that is designed to provide refuge where flora and fauna can flourish.

"The reference is to the performing arts, which are so associated with Cannes..." said Taylor. "We held a public casting session for volunteers who could prove they lived in Cannes, and I took a whole range of masks of old and young people. Then I selected six faces I thought were the most full of character and based the sculptures on them," he added.

To see the sculptures, people will have to swim out about 60 feet from the shore. The sculptures can be seen from the surface without diving equipment.

"The waters are incredibly clear and the bottom is flat. It's free and it's public, so anyone can go and see them," said Taylor.

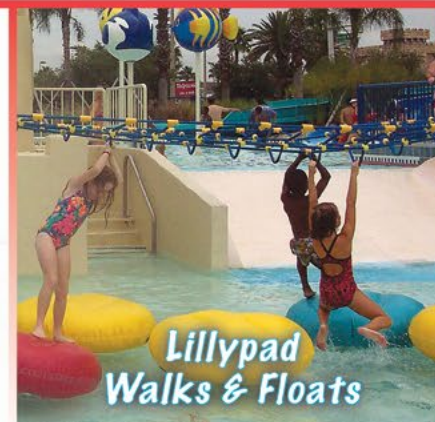
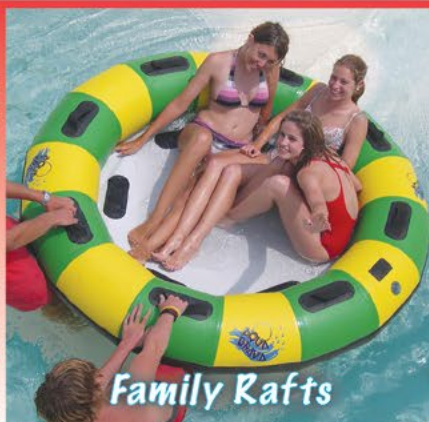


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World's Largest Swimming Lesson to be held on June 17, 2021

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — Now in its 12th year, **The World's Largest Swimming Lesson (WLSL)** serves as a crucial platform for the aquatics industry to build awareness about the fundamental importance of teaching children to swim. With a whole year of learn-to-swim programs having been lost in 2020, the need to provide children with access to formal swimming lessons this summer has become more important than ever.

"A dire consequence of the pool closures created by the 2020 pandemic is that millions of children did not have the chance to begin swimming lessons as they normally would," said **Rick Root**, president of the **World Waterpark Association**, the founding organization of the World's Largest Swimming Lesson.

This year's WLSL event will take place over the course of 24 hours at host locations that are able to reopen on Thursday, June 17, 2021.

Local WLSL events take place at waterparks, aquatic centers, swim schools, YMCA's and other water leisure venues. Traditional and socially-distanced lesson plans will be available.

The WLSL is unveiling a new #21in21 campaign to encourage host locations of all sizes to get back on deck for the WLSL's June 17.



The massive international World's Largest Swimming Lesson event returns on June 17. COURTESY WORLD WATERPARK ASSOCIATION



Whether facilities are able to host just 21 swimmers and their parents due to social distancing protocols or 2,100 because the whole community is in full-swing, organizers are encouraging as many locations as possible to participate in this year's program.

"Over the last 11 years of hosting the WLSL event, we've learned we can make a real difference in our communities if we all work together," said Root. "By committing to the #21in21 campaign, we can get kids and families back on track to being water aware by participating in life-saving swim lessons."

Aquatic facilities and trainers in the local community are encouraged to help parents connect the dots between learn-

ing to swim and staying safer in and around the water. Registration for host locations opens April 1, 2021 at wsl.org.

The purpose of the event is to provide kids and parents exposure to life-saving water safety skills and build awareness about the vital importance of teaching children to swim to prevent drowning. Aquatic venues are joining the WLSL in its mission to spread the message "Swimming Lessons Save Lives" to kids and adults to help prevent drowning.

Per the **Center for Disease Control**, drowning remains the leading cause of unintended, injury related death for U.S. children ages one to four, the second leading cause

for children under 14 and the fifth leading cause of unintentional injury deaths for all ages in the United States. Drowning is an even greater threat in other countries around the world. According to the **World Health Organization**, drowning is the third leading cause of unintentional injury death worldwide, accounting for 7% of all injury-related deaths.

Participation in formal swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning among children ages one to four by up to 88%.

In 2014, a survey completed by the American Red Cross found that more than half of all Americans (54%) either can't swim or don't have all of the basic swimming skills.

Parental supervision can be key to safe swimming. According to a 2016 **Safe Kids Worldwide** report, despite the fact that lack of supervision played a role in the majority of drowning deaths, less than half of parents (49%) indicate they remain within arms' reach of their child in the water.

Since its inception, more than 320,000 children and adults have participated in life-saving WLSL lessons, generating more than two billion media impressions about the vital importance of learning to swim.

•wsl.org



It's time to get back on deck for the
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event on June 17, 2021 and help us put an end to drowning by spreading the word that Swimming Lessons Save Lives™.

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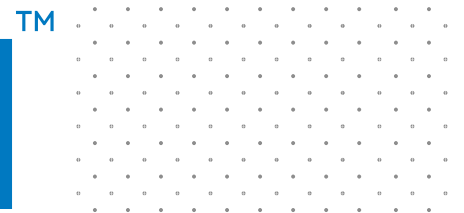
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BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

► Extreme Engineering's Sky Tag, Surfin Tsunami — page 34 / New Mexico amusements still shuttered — page 36

Gibtown goes with lower vendor numbers, attendee participation

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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RIVERVIEW, Fla. — While not all Florida Week activities that are typically held took place, this certainly is not a typical year. Organizers of the various events were cautious and had numerous COVID-19 mitigation practices in place.

Central to all activity, was the 53rd annual **International Independent Showmen's Foundation (IISF)** annual Super Trade Show & Extravaganza. It took place under muted attendance, estimated at 3,000, down from 8,000 in 2020. There were 40 indoor and 32 outdoor vendors throughout the 20-acre site, with four first-time companies. They included **Elite Trade Show Services/Marquee; Encore Concessions — Fab Metals; Mid-America Engine and Urethane Specialties**. Only two indoor vendors could not make it due to weather issues.

Many of the usual outdoor ride manufacturers and sellers brought one or no rides and primarily operated out of tents. This included **Rides 4 U, Dalton Rides and Wisdom Manufacturing**. The exception was **Amusement Devices & Manufacturing LLC**, from Iowa, which had a half dozen rides and rentals at the show.

A Flying Dragon ride (**SBF/Visa Group** mini pirate ship) was on display at the Rides 4 U booth. Owner **Len Soled** told AT. "I'm really pleased I went to Gibtown. The one third who came yielded good conversations. We planted some seeds. I'm optimistic on what lies ahead. I'm looking for the start of many more trade shows ahead."

Frederiksen Fun Slides brought five slides to exhibit — two new and three used. "Had a lot of spectators. No sales for me," said owner **Jim Frederiksen**. He attributes the



From atop a Frederiksen slide, some of the outdoor rides and other equipment at the trade show can be seen, including a new Gosetto funhouse made for Deggeller Attractions (above left). Above right are honorees at the OABA annual member meeting (l to r): Sam Johnston, Jeanne McDonagh, Jerry Aldrich and Al De Rusha. COURTESY STEVE O'DONNELL, OABA

slow times to a variety of reasons. The carnivals did not get out much (if at all) in 2020. Staffing issues, financing concerns and, of course, COVID-19 were additional culprits. Frederiksen said parks are still buying, and the pumpkin patch (Halloween-type activities) are the hottest niche for his operation right now. The company has expanded into outside projects including goat trailers to help keep employees working.

Overseas manufacturers and other companies outside of North America were unable to attend due to travel restrictions to the United States. Some of them took to other methods to communicate and visit with their customers and potential ones. Such was the case with **Kolmax Plus, S.R.O.**, Ostrava, Czech Republic. Sales Manager **Irene Zvarova** encouraged interested parties to have a private meeting and connect via WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Viber or telegram.

Another long-distance manufacturer, **Luna-Park Rides**, Zakopane, Poland, reached out to its customers as well. "We normally display by the front gate, by the reception office. Sadly, this year we

cannot exhibit, because we are unable to enter your country, due to the border closures. We live in [the] 21st century, so we have technology on our side. I hope we are going to make good use of it," said **Izabela Smith**, company representative, in a video presentation.

Then there were vendors who wanted to be there but couldn't make it because of canceled flights from the weather around the rest of the country. One such person was **Gina Guglielmi** with **Intermark Ride Group**. She tried numerous times and days to fly in from Nashville, and they just "kept canceling flights." Her company represents new and used rides for **Fabbri Group, Gosetto s.r.l.** and **Moser Rides**, among others.

Deggeller Attractions had its brand new Gosetto funhouse on display. It was brought in by **Joey Weaver** with **Fair Ride Entertainment**. Response was good as Weaver explained: "It went really well. There was a lot of interest. People liked the quality of the piece. I got a lot of good feedback." **Andy Deggeller** and his company came up with the theming for Atlantis, an adaptation of the successful, New York, New



York ride. It has a wooden revolving barrel element, reminiscent of those found in operations decades earlier. The ride took the Outstanding Outdoor Display award at the show.

Inside, the exhibitors were confined to the center aisles, to tighten things up.

Throughout the grounds, both indoor and outdoor, numerous COVID-19 practices were in play, including temperature checks, hand washing and sanitizing stations, the requirement of face masks, social distancing and frequent public bathroom cleanings.

The **National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials (NAARSO)** again offered inspector certification exams for level one inspectors on Tuesday. This was the second time training and testing at the trade show has taken place.

Concurrent with the four-day event were a pair of workshops on Wednesday with timely topics. "Events That Operated During the 2020 Season" and "Reopening During A Pandemic," were both popular and well attended sessions.

On Thursday, the **JKJ Workforce Agency** and the **Small Business Workforce**

Alliance conducted two sessions on the "H2B Balancing Act: Practical, Political Strategies for Survival in this New Abnormal."

A pair of programs were available on Friday. A ServSafe certification program for food handling along with industrial truck/forklift training, were offered to registered attendees.

Tony Thomas, a concessionaire from Wapwallopen, Pennsylvania, felt the time spent was well worth it. "It was a good show with the basics that we needed. I was there two days — purchased signage and drink cups. [There was a] beautiful miniature circus display by **Brooke Evans** [with **Circus Model Builders**.] All in all, a good time to socialize."

Weaver had positive feedback about the trade show. "The IISF did a really good job. I saw more show owners on the first day. Attendance was better than I expected."

"It's worth coming. We sold a couple of pieces. Not many here, but you don't need many. I'm pleased," said **Mark Blumhagen** with **Rides 4 U**.

"All things consid-

► See GIBTOWN, page 32



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► GIBTOWN

Continued from page 30

ered, it went very well," said IISF President **Lee Stevens**. "Vendors were pleased with people who did attend. Those who came, came out to shop." When asked about the rest of this year, he said, "I'm very optimistic about the season. When we get out, the people will want to play."

This was the first major carnival show for the industry since last February owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Teresa Rimes**, trade show secretary, was pleased with what their organization accomplished. "We took the initiative, and we did it! We opened. We're grateful for what we got. Buyers were here, not just dust-kickers. The first day was perhaps our best day." Rimes indicated a few vendors thanked the IISF for putting on the show this year.

Other organizations held activities in the area that week.

The **NICA (National Independent Concessionaires Association)/Fare Foods** food show took place early in the week, with all events at the **Sheraton Tampa Brandon Hotel** in Tampa. Activities started off with a vendor and customer appreciation event on Monday. The next day, NICA held a vari-



Marla Calico, IAFE president and CEO was on hand presenting a few workshops for OABA, NICA and IISF events. She is pictured with OABA President, Greg Chiecko (above left). Taking time for a breather from the show were Len Soled, Rides 4 U; Gary Slade, Amusement Today; and Ramon Rosario with Zamperla (above middle). Bob's Space Racers had their One Step Hand Sanitizer Station on display (above right). COURTESY OABA; AT/GARY SLADE



ety of educational workshops. The discussions were very current and informative; reflecting the struggles and solutions that the industry is choosing as it moves forward. Speakers also presented topics on "Insurance Principals – Back to Basics," "DOT Today," and "Payment Options that Ensure Customer Safety." Also, on Tuesday, NICA kicked off their website-based Peer to Peer Resource Center.

That evening was the Fare Foods Food Show, a one-day event this time around. The layout was altered to comply with the CDC guidelines allowing for social distancing and attendance capacity with one entrance and

one exit. Food samples were only allowed if they were served by the exhibitors. There were 50, which was down slightly. Attendees were offered three time-slots that were scheduled in two-hour increments. The change resulted in attendees enjoying the extra time they were allowed to visit with exhibitors learning more about their products displayed and ideas offered. This change will continue for future shows.

Over 350 people attended the NICA general member meeting Wednesday evening, with a Year in Review conducted by **Rey O'Day**, executive director. **Don Delahoyde**, 2020 president,

passed the gavel to incoming President, **Sandy Class**. **Marla Calico**, IAFE president gave a presentation on "Movin Forward Together." Additional speakers were **Greg Chiecko**, OABA CEO, and **Eugene Cassidy**, IAFE chairman. The annual hall of fame award went to **Greg Miller**, a two-time past president. The NICA Foundation awarded over \$33,500 in scholarships to 18 recipients.

The **Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA)** held their usual round of events that started on Wednesday. That day was full of meetings, workshops and case studies, along with the afternoon reception for the 2021 Hall of Fame and Pioneer

recipients. It was held on the second floor of the **International Independent Showmen's Museum**. The winners were formally recognized Friday evening during the 56th annual member meeting and chair's reception that was held at the **Sheraton Tampa Brandon Hotel**. This year's recipients included **Jeanne McDonagh** and **Sam Johnston** – Hall of Fame and **Jerry Aldrich** – Pioneer award. The OABA also presented an award to **Al De Rusha** in appreciation of his 30 years of OABA membership and his help with all the jamborees. He also is instrumental in developing videos of all the award recipients that are presented at the annual meeting. In 2017, De Rusha joined the OABA Hall of Fame.

On Thursday, board and scholarship meetings took place during the day. Thirty students (23 returning college and seven high school seniors) were awarded \$1,000 scholarships. In addition, \$2,000 each was allocated to show schools, Deggeller Academy (Deggeller Attractions) and Cammack Christian Academy (RCS.) That evening, the always popular 5th annual TopGolf fundraiser event with silent and gypsy auction was held. It was a huge success raising much needed money for the OABA's H2B agenda.

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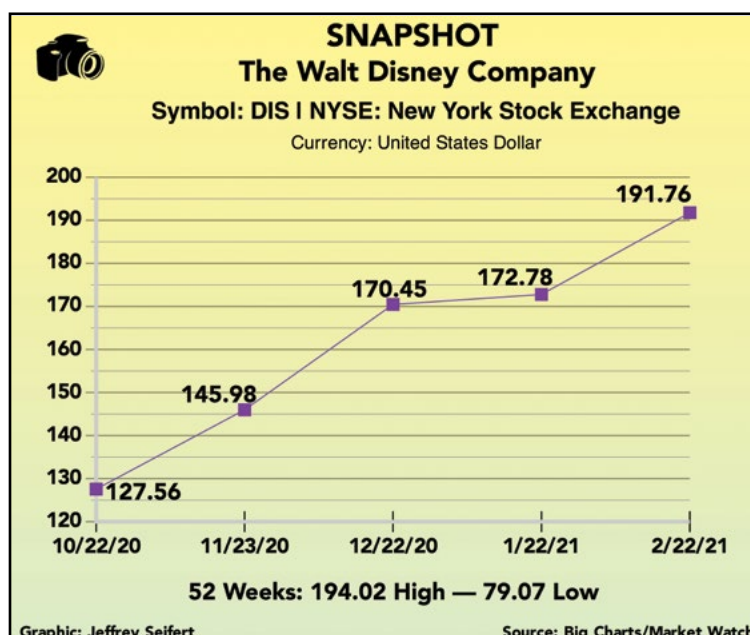
MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 02/22/21	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	69.52	72.10	33.00
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	48.00	51.97	13.00
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	52.50	53.60	31.70
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	191.76	194.02	79.07
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.08	0.19	0.07
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	44.44	73.59	12.55
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	5790.00	6010.00	2080.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	0.66	0.89	0.38
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	21.30	23.05	9.08
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	37.52	38.80	5.90
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	86.23	101.00	19.25
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	711.00	875.00	490.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	38.94	40.66	6.75
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	44.30	46.15	8.75
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	722.00	768.00	550.00

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

Worldwide Markets: **ASX**, Australian Securities Exchange; **CSE**, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; **LSE**, London Stock Exchange; **NYSE**, New York Stock Exchange; **NASDAQ**, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; **SEHK**, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; **SZSE**, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; **TSEC**, Taiwan Stock Exchange, Corp.; **TYO/TSE**, Tokyo Stock Exchange
—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal

Cedar Fair's Dorney Park used its parking lot as the site for a mass, drive-through vaccination location to help distribute COVID-19 vaccines. COURTESY DORNEY PARK



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S.)	As of 2/15/21	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$2.898	-\$0.042
Midwest	\$2.852	\$0.095
Gulf Coast	\$2.627	-\$0.031
Mountain	\$2.787	-\$0.071
West Coast	\$2.960	-\$0.121
California	\$3.635	-\$0.139

CURRENCY

On 2/22/21 \$1 USD =

0.8250	EURO
0.7133	GBP (British Pound)
105.41	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.8961	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.2703	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.2613	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

Shuttered parks continue impact on Disney

ANAHEIM, Calif. — **The Walt Disney Company** reported earnings for its first fiscal quarter ended January 2, 2021. Diluted earnings per share (EPS) from continuing operations for the quarter decreased 98% to \$0.02 from \$1.17 in the prior-year quarter. Excluding certain items, diluted EPS for the quarter decreased 79% to \$0.32 from \$1.53 in the prior-year quarter. Results in the quarter ended January 2, 2021 were adversely impacted by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

"We believe the strategic actions we're taking to transform our company will fuel our growth and enhance shareholder value, as demonstrated by the incredible strides we've made in our DTC business, reaching more than 146 million total paid subscriptions across our streaming services at the end of the quarter," said **Bob Chapek**, the company's chief executive officer.

The most significant impact was at the Disney Parks, Experiences and Products segment where since late in the second quarter of fiscal 2020, Disney's parks and resorts have been closed or operating at significantly reduced capacity and its cruise ship sailings have been suspended. Disney Parks, Experiences and Products revenues for the quarter decreased 53% to \$3.6 billion, and segment operating results decreased \$2.6 billion to a loss of \$119 million. Lower operating results for the quarter were due to decreases at both the domestic and international parks and experiences businesses.

Cedar Fair reports fourth quarter results

SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** announced its 2020 fourth-quarter and full-year results ending Dec. 31, 2020.

"We are optimistic that levels of attendance at our parks and resort properties will significantly improve in 2021, particularly as COVID-19 vaccines become broadly available over the next few months," said Cedar Fair President and CEO **Richard A. Zimmerman**. "In anticipation of improving demand, we are poised to resume normal operations, particularly during our seasonally stronger back half of the year. We have strategically designed our operating plan for the 2021 season specifically to minimize cash burn in the pre-opening period and correlate park operating calendars with forecasted demand while growing our season pass base for the 2021 and 2022 seasons."

For the full year ended Dec. 31, 2020, net revenues totaled \$182 million versus \$1.47 billion for 2019. The decrease in net revenues was the direct result of a 25.3 million-visit decrease in attendance and a \$101 million decrease in out-of-park revenues, with both shortfalls due to COVID-19-related park closures and operating calendar changes in 2020, as well as the negative impact of the pandemic on demand upon reopening.

In-park per capita spending in 2020 decreased by 4% to \$46.38 compared to \$48.32 in 2019. This year-over-year decline was attributable to decreases in guest spending on extra-charge attractions, primarily front-of-the-line Fast Lane products, and admissions resulting from a higher season pass mix. These declines were offset in part by higher in-park per capita spending on food, merchandise, and games.

Comcast reports for fourth quarter, year

PHILADELPHIA — **Comcast Corporation**, parent company for **Universal Resorts**, reported results for the quarter and year ended December 31, 2020.

Universal theme park revenue decreased 62.9% to \$579 million in the fourth quarter of 2020, primarily due to **Universal Orlando Resort** and **Universal Studios Japan** operating at limited capacity, while **Universal Studios Hollywood** remains closed as a result of COVID-19. Theme parks adjusted EBITDA loss was \$15 million in the fourth quarter of 2020, which included pre-opening costs related to **Universal Beijing Resort**.

For the 12 months ending December 31, 2020, revenue from the theme parks segment decreased 68.9% to \$1.8 billion compared to 2019, primarily owing to the temporary closures of Universal Studios Japan in late February and Universal Orlando Resort and Universal Studios Hollywood in mid-March as a result of COVID-19. Theme parks adjusted EBITDA loss was \$541 million.

"With the vaccines rolling out throughout the world, we are optimistic that the parts of our business that had been most impacted will soon be back on a path towards growth," said **Brian L. Roberts**, chairman and CEO.

Innovative concepts provide cost-effective solutions in current climate

Extreme Engineering announces new rides: Sky Tag, Surfin Tsunami

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ATHENS, Texas — With the global health crisis came numerous challenges in forging ahead in the amusement industry. Expenditures are more closely scrutinized, and future investments are more tentative. **Extreme Engineering** is excited not only to bring forth two new innovations for ride ideas but to also provide solutions in times of guarded budgets.

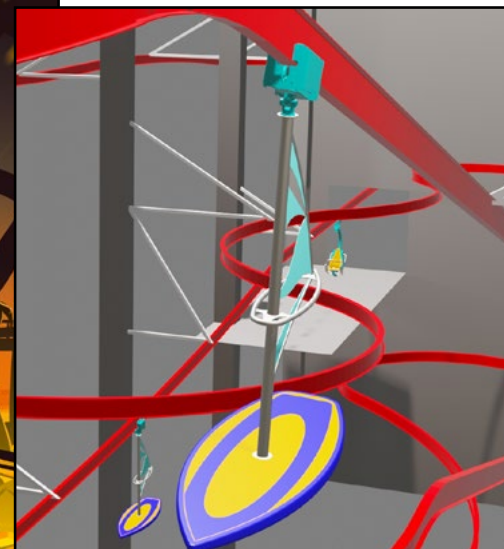
"I'm thrilled that our company has two all-new coaster options to offer in 2021," said **Phil Wilson**, executive vice president. "These attractions check all the boxes for our industry moving forward in 2021. Price, experience, capacity and family-friendly are all jam packed into these exciting rides."

Known for the award-winning Cloud Coaster suspended roller coasters, Extreme Engineering is unveiling two offshoots of this platform.

Sky Tag is an elevated dark ride system that uses coaster vehicles equipped with phasers provided by **LaserBlast**. During the ride, passengers take aim at other coaster vehicles and targets within a darkened enclosed environment.

Theming is provided by **Creative Works**. Numerous theming options, including adventure, space, ocean or western are designed and ready to go.

"We partnered with some of the best suppliers in the industry to create an all-inclusive attraction," said Wilson. "No one has this type of attraction or experience in a sus-



Sky Tag (above) will be the first suspended laser tag dark ride coaster. Surfin Tsunami (inset) allows people to ride a suspended coaster in a standing position. COURTESY EXTREME ENGINEERING

pended coaster. Starting at under \$500,000 turnkey, this is a fantastic solution."

"This attraction was actually designed in response to COVID and the economic conditions facing the parks and family entertainment centers," said **Pete Barto**, vice president of sales and strategic partnerships. "The budgets aren't what they were in the past and won't be for a few years. We wanted a product that gets decent capacity and didn't take up a lot of space. It's 100% turnkey, so there are no surprises to anyone willing to invest in a new attraction. We wanted it unique; I'm not aware of any laser tag roller coasters out there."

Although the feel of a dark ride is apparent on Sky Tag, the coaster is still gravity driven.

"The real selling point is that this can fit in almost any space," added Barto. "It could be hung above something else. It could be a replacement ride

in a building that is no longer in use. It's very cost friendly."

FECs and parks can operate a Sky Tag in as small as a 40-foot-by-40-foot space. The height requirement for ceiling height can be as low as 16 feet. Barto is intrigued by the idea of having the coaster enter a traditional laser tag arena to where both participants on the floor and riders on the coaster can interact.

"We're really looking at the applications that this ride might lead to," Barto told *Amusement Today*. "I think we are at the tip of the iceberg of what we could do with this ride platform. I think we've put together a really nice package that has some unique twists to it. There's going to be a lot to look at and shoot at."

According to Barto, partners LaserBlast and Creative Works are working on ways that owners and operators can change out targets and theming to keep the ride fresh over time.

Surfin Tsunami is a radical departure from typical suspended coaster experiences. With this new concept, single riders hop aboard surfboards attached to an above track via a pole. This pole provides a grab bar for surfers to hang onto while a restraint system allows them to safely enjoy the ride in a standing position. Indoors or out, the track can curve and weave through existing attractions at a small park or FEC.

"There are a lot of zipline-type harness attractions out there that are sometimes compared to the Cloud Coaster. We're trying to bridge the gap between a zipline and a true coaster," said Barto. "We're looking at ways to make that ride experience unique, exciting, fun and different. It's not something you have to strap yourself into in Velcro and zippers."

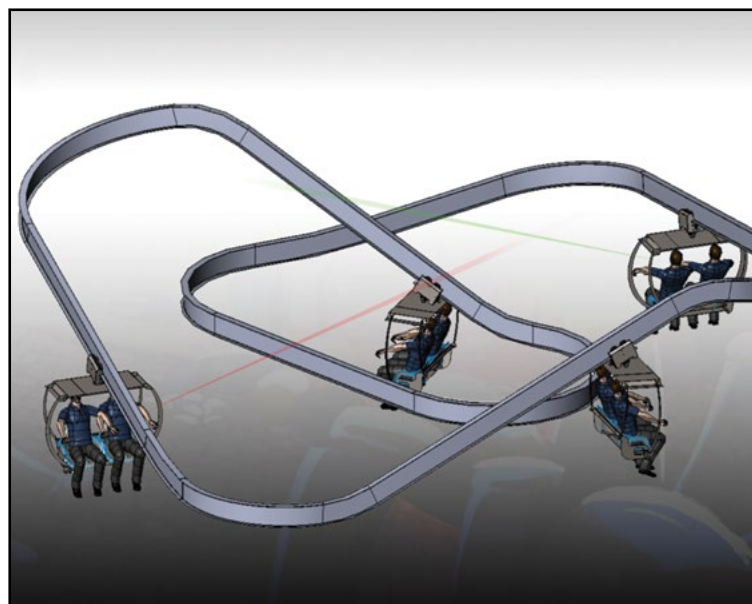
As riders soar overhead, turns and curves in the track let passengers "ride the wave" with a fun feeling of swing.

"The goal is to get someone standing up as much as possible while still properly restraining them safely. Imagine riding a surfboard 50 ... 60 ... 70 feet in the air. It's going to be an interesting feeling as you go around turns and feel that sway effect," added Barto.

Extreme Engineering reported that they received several requests for proposals within 24 hours of unveiling the two new concepts.

"We're excited about it," said Barto. "We've had responses from customers that said they were just waiting for this type of attraction. We think the market is really going to embrace this. The parks and the industry are in a tough spot right now. They want to spend money and excite their base, but this is a tough time. To be able to bring something that is exciting but won't break the budget, it feels like we can help with the healing of that."

•extremeengineering.com



On this suggested Sky Tag layout (above left), four vehicles traverse a small layout twice for two minutes of fun. Creative Works has developed many themes to use with Sky Tag (above right). COURTESY EXTREME ENGINEERING

Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

In 2019, **Rebecca Wood** was named president of **Six Flags Great Escape Resort** in Lake George, New York. She started with Six Flags at that park in 2009 as director of public relations.

Six Flags Great Escape opened in 1954, originally as **Storyland USA**. It includes a hotel, theme park as well as an outdoor and indoor water park.

Six Flags Entertainment Corporation is one of the world's largest regional theme park companies and operators of water parks in North America, with \$1.4 billion in revenue and 25 parks across the United States, Mexico and Canada.

Accomplishments and affiliations...

- Member International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), involved with IAAPA committees
- Awarded participation in IAAPA's leadership program, spending one week at the Harvard Business School, 2016
- Board member of the Chamber of Commerce, United Way and YMCA

Wood sees simplicity in her industry

QUEENSBURY, N.Y. — Rebecca Wood remembers her first amusement park work experience very well.

She was 15 years old and was helping a friend who had a catering job at Canobie Lake Park, Salem, New Hampshire. The park was located about four miles from Wood's hometown of Windham, New Hampshire.

"I was running with a pan of corn, tripped and fell into the corn," she said. "I now have a huge respect for those working in those types of events. And no one lets me carry the corn."

The irony is not lost on her that she is now resort president of Six Flags Great Escape Resort.

Wood had a traditional youth. Her father, James Valenti, was an optometrist, and her mother, Jean Valenti, was an executive director of the northeastern branch of the Internal Revenue Service. She grew up with two older brothers, Andy and Jeff Valenti.

She still visited Canobie Lake Park after her disastrous corn dive as well as other amusement and theme parks, but it was for recreation. It would be almost a decade before she worked in a park setting again.

She played field hockey and basketball in high school, receiving a basketball scholarship to play Division I basketball at St. Bonaventure University in the city of the same name in New York state.

She also had found a seasonal job at a local family entertainment center, Victorian Park Entertainment Center in Salem, New Hampshire. This center, which has since permanently closed, offered arcade games, ice cream and miniature golf. She worked summers during high school and college.

In 2004, she graduated from St. Bonaventure with a degree in public relations and communications.

After college graduation, Wood spent several years in various positions and companies, just trying to find her footing. She finally hit on a public relations job with a company that managed shopping malls. She really liked this position, but it wasn't long that another opportunity knocked.

A former colleague of hers saw a job posting for a director of public relations at The Great Escape and immediately thought of Wood.

"He sent me the posting," she said. "He said that when he read it, it just felt like it was perfect for me."

She applied and got the job. And it did feel perfect for her.

"I felt like I was home," Wood said. "I think it was the people and the energy I felt."

She spent five years as the director of public relations. Then she spent five more years as the director of communications. She was then promoted to resort president.

She has loved every minute of it.

"I think a lot of people underestimate how much passion and energy goes into this industry," she said. "It is not only about how much we love our jobs but why we love what we do. We are providing fun for people. And, for me, it is as much about the team I work with as the guests that visit the resort."

Wood feels she has drawn a lot of strength and work ethics from her mother.

"My mom was a very hard working person," she said. "She always told me that the value of a job is what you are learning in that job. Is it keeping you challenged? And the other thing is: Are you having fun?"

What has kept her at Six Flags Great Escape is how the resort and the company have become her family, literally and figuratively.

"I ended up marrying a man

Rebecca Wood

President
Six Flags Great Escape
Queensbury, New York



who worked in the communications department," she said.

Her husband, Michael Wood, is now a communications consultant.

She said Six Flags has been supportive in helping her to become a success. She has had many mentors along the way. Bonnie Weber, Six Flags senior vice president, park operations, was one of them. There have been others. There have been those that have inspired her to "branch out of the silo of public relations."

You know, they say it takes village," she said.

She does want to expand her responsibilities with Six Flags eventually. Her career is important to her as is her family.

"When I married Michael Wood, I was blessed with three awesome stepchildren," she said. "David is 18 years old and already in college. Marie is 15 years old and is a sophomore in high school. And Jake is 10 years old, a sixth grader. When he is older, we have said we would look into perhaps moving to another location."

Wood said the most significant changes she has seen since she first started in the industry has been in the advancement of technology.

"It has brought the industry a long ways, but there is still so much potential there," she said.

Wood feels she is seeing more women coming into the industry. "Because we are one of Six Flags' smaller properties, we sometimes can be a development park," she said. "We can see people come into the industry and watch them grow into leaders. I love that. I hope that my role here will inspire others so they know they always have a seat at the table."

And even though the COVID-19 pandemic, a factor for more than a year now, has created significant negative impacts to the industry, Wood said there has been a silver lining.

"And that is in safety," she said. "Safety is who we are and I think people see that. Families still need to get away and they have been able to trust us as they do."

Woods said she feels the industry has given to her a family, people, passion and love.

"I just hope that I will be able to give somebody else the same thing," she said. "And I hope that people will see the simplicity of what we do. We are creating future leaders and future thrills."

—Pam Sherborne

New Mexico amusement facilities still have no answers from state

AT: John W.C. Robinson
jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

NEW MEXICO — As *Amusement Today* goes to press, news has been released that New York amusement facilities have been given the green light to open in March and April (see story, page 46), and California's theme parks are starting to get a sense of a timeline for their reopenings.

However, the "Land of Enchantment" is proving to be anything but for its amusement parks and family entertainment centers. **Cliff's Amusement Park** of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and **Western Playland** of Sunland Park, New Mexico, were closed throughout 2020 due to the state's COVID-19 restrictions. In addition, all of the state's family entertainment centers, such as Albuquerque's **Urban Air Adventure Park** have remain shuttered in 2021. And none of these facilities have been given any guidelines or update as to when they might be allowed to reopen.

"The state has not given us, nor or any other business in this category any indication of when we might be allowed to open.

It could be next year for all I know," said **Thomas Garcia**, owner of the New Mexico Urban Air franchise. New Mexican Gov. **Michelle Lujan Grisham** has the statewide protocols under a three-tiered color system, similar to a traffic light. But, even once areas are in the green tier, what the state has dubbed "close contact recreational facilities" (CCRF) still are not cleared to reopen.

Garcia questions the logic in separating CCRF's from other businesses: "There are gyms open, climbing wall facilities and ninja warrior courses open [in the state]. My daughter goes to gymnastics and jumps on a trampoline every time she goes. We have all of those attractions but we can't open. Why? We are insured as a gym."

With 2020 in the past, seasonal parks are clearly focused on 2021. Cliff's Amusement Park typically opens in April and that is not far off for a park that hires hundreds of local teenagers on a seasonal

basis every year. In October, **Gary Hays**, owner of Cliff's, told local station **KOAT-TV**: "I honestly don't know if we can survive without opening up [in 2021]."

"There are 154 Urban Air franchises in the U.S.," explained Garcia. "We are the only Urban Air in the country that has never been opened to some capacity in the pandemic."

"We have submitted a 40-page reopening plan to the governor and health inspectors office," Garcia continued. "They have not sent any representatives to any other Urban Airs that are open. Since we are in the category of close contact recreational facilities, the governor herself told me that she will not open me without opening the rest of the category, even though she believes we can keep guests safe."

In an effort to gain some movement and information, Garcia partnered with two other amusement facilities in a lawsuit against the state. "We have had a lawsuit in federal court since early November. We can't get a hearing date," said Garcia. "Four other trampoline parks filed a lawsuit against the state

[in early February]." Several New York state FECs — including **Dave & Busters** and **Urban Air Adventure Park** — filed a similar lawsuit in February, soon thereafter Gov. **Andrew Cuomo** greenlit an opening timeline for the FECs.

In an email to **KOAT-TV**, a spokesperson from the Governor's office said: "As a whole, the state has made great progress as we continue to weather the pandemic, but government's role is to ensure that protecting the health and safety of New Mexicans remains the top priority. The hope is that as New Mexicans continue to act responsibly and safely to limit the spread of COVID-19 and vaccinations continue to be administered, further reducing virus transmission rates statewide, we will be able to evaluate what comes next for New Mexicans and New Mexico businesses after the Green Level, potentially a 'Green Plus,' where the risk of viral transmission has been reduced to the point that we can cautiously invite even more risk and enhance capacities at more categories of commercial activities."

Garcia disagrees with the state's position. "We are worse than Florida through this pandemic in cases-per-100,000 and [Florida is] fully open," said Garcia. "New Mexico is worse than Florida in average cases per 100,000 and yet New Mexico is the most restrictive state in the nation. We have a year of evidence and the evidence says that we should be open."

Not being able to open is affecting all levels of employees within these amusement facilities. Cliff's Amusement Park had to lay off 20 full-time employees in 2020. Cliffs' workforce consists of 98% teenagers. They are the state's largest employer of young people.

Unemployment is taking its toll on Urban Air's staff as well. "One of our employees was out on the street and now living with my business partner," said Garcia. "Twenty-five percent of our employees had addresses out of state when we called them to ask where to send their W2. Most moved because they couldn't find work here."

The office of Gov. Grisham can be reached via the state's website.

•governor.state.nm.us

LA ProPoint completes renovations during shutdown, ensures safety

SUN VALLEY, Calif. — Design, engineering and fabrication supplier for theatrical and theme park systems, **LA ProPoint** was able to take on and finalize several large scale projects in the California area despite the statewide COVID-19 restrictions which severely limited in-state businesses.

"Even in the midst of a global pandemic, we persevered and were able to complete several significant projects, all while respecting COVID-19 restrictions and ensuring the safety of our workers," said **Mark Riddlesperger**, president of LA ProPoint.

At **SoFi Stadium** in Inglewood, California, LA ProPoint was charged with the design, fabrication and installation of massive custom hanging box truss structures and supporting equipment that are used to mount lighting and audio instruments for the playing field and grandstands. Owing to the unique nature of the stadium roof, and its immense scale, the instruments are not accessible by catwalks or any other permanent static structure. Instead, they float suspended at great height in space within a labyrinth of the roof's structural cables. LA ProPoint's imaginative work encompassed structural engineering, automation design, fabrication within rigorous design tolerances and a rigging installation environment of substantial height and scale.

"With innovation and imagination, we were able to honor our resiliency and commitment to our clients," stated Riddlesperger.

LA ProPoint also completed renovations and upgrades at the 500-seat **Mandell Weiss Theatre**, one of the **La Jolla Playhouse** performance spaces located on the **University of California's** San Diego campus. Once mobilized, LA ProPoint installed a new motorized fire curtain, a counterweight rigging system, safety nets and a custom rolling hatch door



The massive custom hanging box truss structures for lighting and audio equipment at **Sofi Stadium** was completed by **LA ProPoint**. COURTESY LA PROPOINT

with removable guard rails. These upgrades brought safety and reliability up to modern day standards, as well as added new flexibility and functionality to the theater rigging systems and infrastructure.

For the **Academy Museum of Motion Pictures**, LA ProPoint completed work in two theaters in Los Angeles. Concept design was provided by architect **Renzo Piano**, and the **Renzo Piano Building Workshop**. In each theater, LA ProPoint installed innovative, complex, curved projection screens complete with automated screen masking systems that provide the ability to frame any size image, at any aspect ratio, and locate it anywhere on the screen. The result is a unique theater experience exclusive to the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures.

With the state of California officially loosening its COVID-19 restrictions and many local attractions reopening, LA ProPoint's projects are closer to being enjoyed by the public.

•lapoint.com

Legacy completes move into San Antonio office



SAN ANTONIO — Legacy Amusement Distributors, an amusement industry coin-operated machine source has relocated its offices from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, to San Antonio, Texas. The company, which has serviced the industry for more than 50 years, has become known for its slogan of "the go-to guys" and services the southeastern United States.

COURTESY LEGACY AMUSEMENT DISTRIBUTORS

ON THE MOVE

Tony Moore moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 2016 after being named Executive Director for **Gathering Place**, a \$465 million park that was still under contraction at the time. After five years in Tulsa, Moore is headed south. He has been named president & CEO of **Trinity Park Conservancy** in Dallas, Texas.

"Parks are critical infrastructures that significantly impact the quality of life in our communities. We have seen this more than ever over the past year. The Trinity Park Conservancy has a vital civic mission, and Harold Simmons Park will have a lasting impact on this community, from both social and economic perspectives," said Moore. "I am truly honored to be chosen for this role, and am looking forward to getting to know the Dallas community, working with the Conservancy team and stakeholders across the city to build a thriving park."

During Moore's time, Gathering Place saw immediate success, welcoming tens of thousands of visitors in its first weekend. The park exceeded its attendance projections in the first year with more than 2.8 million visitors. *USA Today* named Gathering Place the 'Best New Attraction' in the country in 2018. *Time* named the park one of the 'World's Greatest Places' for 2019.

After more than 50 years at the helm, **Pan Amusements' Paul Whittaker** has retired, leaving the company in the capable hands of longstanding partner **Paul Adams**.

Whittaker has been in charge of shooting gallery specialist Pan Amusements since 1970. Adams has worked for the company

for almost 40 years, so is ideally placed to take over.

"The pandemic has proved challenging, with a number of our current projects currently at a standstill, but the entire industry is in the same situation," Adams said. "We are still getting countless inquiries from around the world so we're confident we can quickly restart once the lockdown lifts."

Zofia Bil Ryan has joined **American Pinball** as a senior mechanical engineer.

Ryan has more than 30 years of experience in the pinball industry, designing plastic parts, sheet metal parts, mechanical components and game mechanisms. She was the first woman to be hired as a mechanical engineer at **Williams**.

She worked for Williams, **Bally Midway** and created many mechanisms for various pinball games and for casino games. She was awarded six U.S. patents for her designs. They included the two-way knockout mechanism for the Popeye pinball and the roulette scoring device for the same game, the magnetic ball carrier that was used on Dracula, the multi-level play feature on Doctor Who and the multiple path ball ramp for The Machine.

She also designed the mechanical parts for many pinball games for **WMS** and worked with some top game designers on leading games that include Pool Sharks, Bride of Pin Bot, Dirty Harry, Ticket Tac Toe and Junk Yard.



Adams



Moore



Ryan

Leadership change as WhiteWater enters fifth decade

VANCOUVER, B.C. — WhiteWater announced that **Paul Chutter** is succeeding his father (**Geoff Chutter**) as president of WhiteWater. His father will remain as CEO. Together they will continue to steer WhiteWater forward, shaping future entertainment experiences and supporting clients' success.

"To be able to work alongside my father and ensure that [WhiteWater's success] continues long into the future is a huge responsibility and honor that I'm excited to take on," commented Paul.

In his new role, Paul adjusted his leadership team to build one that will help him forge further ahead. **Doug Smith**, who has overseen growth within WhiteWater's Asia Pacific region as the Regional Vice President for the last six years, now steps into the role of Global Head of Sales. In his role, Smith will support the increasingly significant regional offices as they further deepen their capabilities and expand their reach. He will be immersing himself back into the Americas alongside his global responsibilities allowing for **Franceen Gonzales** to take on a new role within WhiteWater.

Gonzales is known for her work championing safety and as a true advocate for the industry. Having held senior operations and strategic development roles with **Great Wolf Resorts** and **Six Flags** before joining WhiteWater seven years ago to lead the Americas region, Gonzales transferred that client perspective into her team, enabling them to support the development of some the region's most exciting projects. Now, she'll use her supplier and customer insights to help WhiteWater continue to elevate the customer journey as Chief Experience Officer.

The Asia Pacific leadership role that Smith vacated is passed on to the experienced hands of **David Bogdonov**, who spent eight years as vice president of business development for China, as parks there rapidly expanded and the industry matured. From 2008 to 2011, he supported sales for the wider Asia region. He has been able to guide park development plans with advice based on his engineering qualifications and large-scale construction project management experience as well as deep regional insight.



Paul Chutter



Smith



Gonzales



Bogdonov

OBITUARIES

Arnold Amusements, Inc. owner Ivan Arnold passes

RIVERVIEW, Fla. — Ivan R. Arnold, age 84, founder and owner of Arnold Amusements Inc, passed on Feb. 4, 2021, after complications from COVID-19.

Born in Traverse City, Michigan, on October 27, 1936, he was the son of Lester and Mabel (Olman) Arnold. He married Agnes Garvin in 1958. At the age of 8, Arnold got his start in the industry as a stake boy for John Reid, eventually becoming an independent ride owner on the Reid Brothers-Happyland Shows. Later Arnold became a unit manager for W.G. Wade Shows. Upon the sale of the show in 1980, Arnold went on to form what is now Arnold Amusements Inc.

Arnold's lifetime of hard work and his hands-on approach built an unrivaled reputation in the outdoor amusement business, traveling throughout Michigan, Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida.

He was a fixture at the IISF Trade Show and Club in Gibsonton. His passion and support of the industry led him to volunteer for leadership roles at the International Independent Showmen's Association (IISA). Arnold was a past president of the IISA and a past president of the Greater Tampa Showmen's Club. He loved to study and chronicle the history of American carnivals, providing time and talent to the IISF Museum, still serving as president when he passed, a position he held for a couple decades.

Arnold was a lifetime member of the Northwestern Michigan Fair Association, a member of the Outdoor Amusement Business Association, the Michigan Festival and Events Association and of the Showmen's Shrine Club. He was inducted into both the IISF hall of fame and the Michigan Association of Fairs hall of fame.

From the Arnold Amusements Facebook page: "We have lost our fearless leader. A man we all looked up to. A man who taught us a work ethic like no other. A husband, father, grandfather, uncle, friend and forever a first-class showmen. We will be forever thankful for the extra time that we all got to spend together this summer. We celebrated everyone's birthday and every holiday together. Something that was usually hard to do with our regular work schedule. We find peace in knowing he made his last round of the midway in Fellsmere, Florida."

Arnold is survived by his wife Agnes; his three children; Tom, Sandy Arnold Schmidt, Jon (Karen) Arnold; five grandchildren, Alex, Lauren and Jillian Arnold, Josh (Hannah) and Kyle (Courtney) Schmidt and three great granddaughters; Marley, Harper, and Chloe Schmidt.

Disneyland photographer Renie Bardeau

CARSON, Calif. — Renie Bardeau, a publicity photographer at Disneyland for nearly 40 years, died of kidney failure Monday, after having recently contracted COVID-19.

Bardeau was responsible for one of the most iconic photos ever taken of the park: An image of Walt Disney strolling in front of Sleeping Beauty Castle. Taken in 1964, it became known as the "Footsteps" photo, and was subsequently printed and sold on merchandise over the years. It is estimated that he'd taken hundreds of thousands of pictures over the years, including 100,000 of Mickey Mouse.

Bardeau's first assignment was covering the opening of Tomorrowland, which included getting a photo of the ribbon-cutting at the monorail with then-Vice President Richard Nixon, his family and Walt Disney.

Disneyland issued a statement reading, "We are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Renie Bardeau, who will long be remembered for some of the most iconic Disneyland photography ever published. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this time."

Upon his retirement in 1998, Bardeau's name was immortalized on an upper-story Main Street window — above a camera shop. The marker reads: "Kingdom Photo Services. Magic Eye to the World. Renie Bardeau. Photographer-Archivist."



Arnold



Bardeau

SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► NAARSO offers classroom, virtual education — page 40 / Making Mardi Gras safe at Fiesta Texas — page 42

New York New York's Big Apple Coaster adds Premier Rides trains

AT: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

LAS VEGAS, Nev. —In just over two weeks, thousands of visitors had already taken a ride on the bright new trains on the 200-plus-foot tall Big Apple Coaster at the New York-New York Hotel and Casino. Premier Rides manufactured the new trains that are themed to look like a New York taxi cab.

And, according to Premier Rides, social media reports were pouring in during the second week of February saying the ride was incredibly smooth.

"New York-New York reported that they were selling a record percentage of all day ride passes, which confirms the comments about how guests and coaster enthusiasts can now ride the coaster over and over," said Premier's Jim Seay. "Tickets have been selling out with an impressive queue."

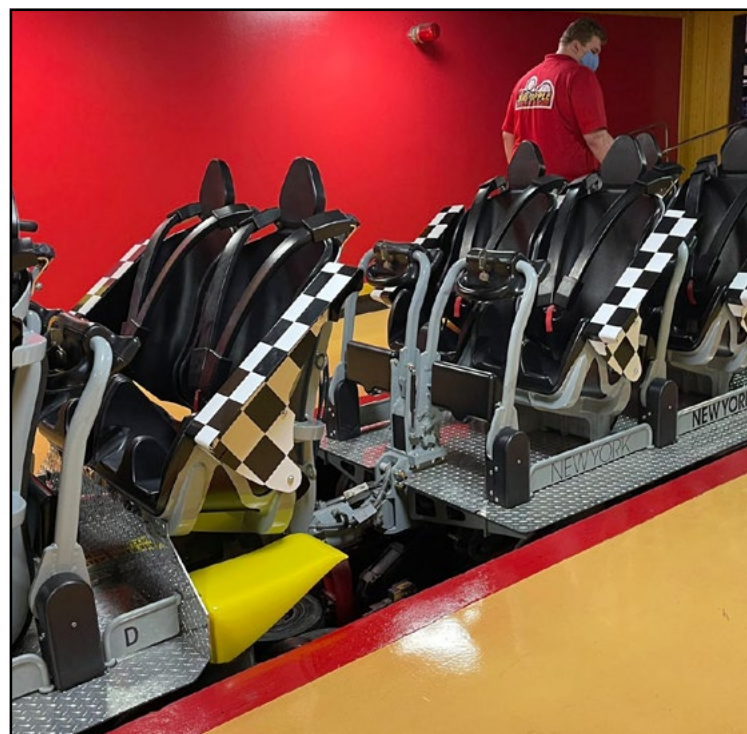
Premier Rides was commissioned by New York-New York Las Vegas to provide a fleet of new trains for the Big Apple Coaster. This project has proved to be one of the largest service contracts in the history of Premier.

"Premier Rides very much appreciates the trust placed in us by the New York-New York Casino team and we very much appreciate the excellent teamwork which has successfully delivered such a transformational result," Seay said.

The New York-New York coaster engineers and the Premier Rides engineers



The 203-foot-tall Big Apple Coaster at New York-New York Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada, reopened January 30 after a renovation project that replaced the coaster's trains. Built by Premier Rides, the fleet of new trains are themed to New York taxi cabs. Premier's project also included upgrades to the lift, track and station (below). COURTESY PREMIER RIDES



► See NYNY, page 39

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PICTURED: ROCKY'S RAPIDS LOG FLUME, INDIANA BEACH

Linda Freeman joins the ASTM International Board of Directors

W. CONSHOHOCKEN, Pa. — **Linda Freeman**, industry manager, entertainment and amusement for **Rockwell Automation** of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, will serve a three-year term on the **ASTM International** board of directors.

Rockwell Automation is a global provider of industrial automation and information technology products and services.

Freeman has more than 24 years of experience at Rockwell Automation, having joined in 1996 as a sales engineer. Over her career, she has worked in multiple manufacturing industries and in other industries such as onboard marine applications and **NASA** space launch



Freeman

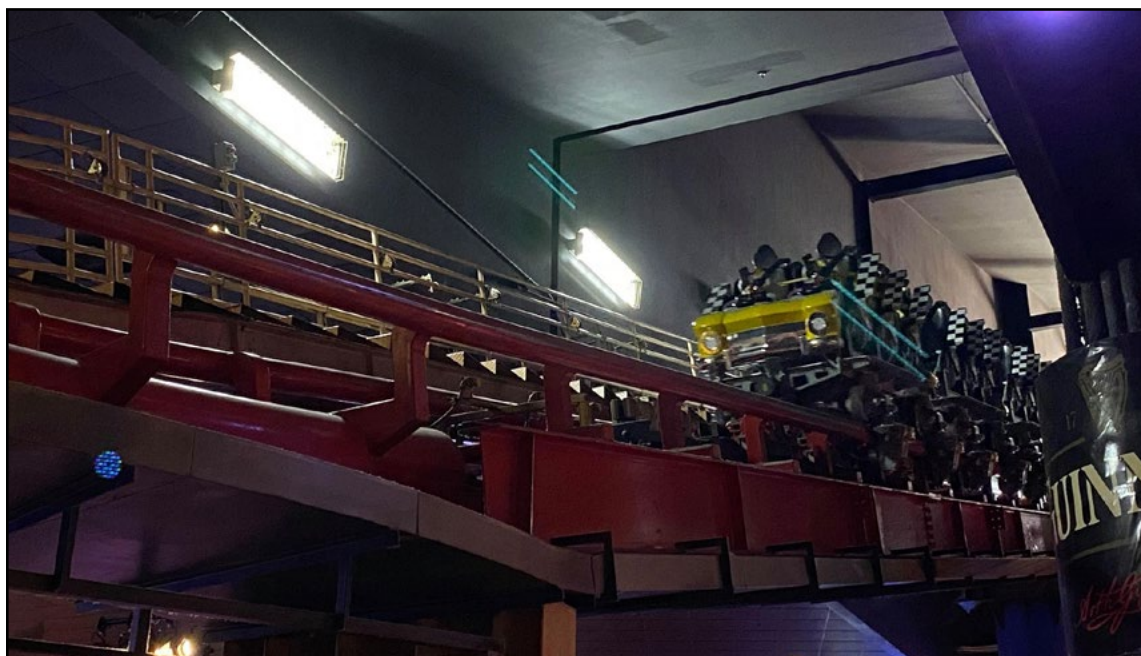
programs.

An ASTM International member since 2010, Freeman is a member-at-large on the executive subcommittee of the amusement rides and devices committee (F24). She also works on several subcommittees and helps lead the F24 student initiative to bring on the next generation of committee members.

Freeman holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the **Georgia Institute of Technology** and is certified by **TÜV Rheinland** as a functional safety engineer and a cybersecurity specialist.

ASTM International's board of directors is made up of 25 leaders from an array of companies, associations, and government bodies worldwide. Several members are based outside the United States.

•astm.org



Premier Rides engineers along with the New York-New York coaster engineers performed all the integration work to the new generation trains to operate successfully. COURTESY PREMIER RIDES

►NYNY

Continued from page 38

jointly performed all of the integration work and upgrades necessary to allow the new generation trains to operate successfully on The Big Apple Coaster. The integration work included upgrades to the lift, track and station, the latter which is themed to a New York City subway station.

"The trains are based on the award winning, industry-proven Sky Rocket style trains," Seay said. "The new trains utilize Premier's award-winning individual lap bar restraint system and feature the comfort collar system (seen on West Coast Racers, Tempesto, Tigris and Electric Eel) to deliver a transformational ride experience."

The new trains consist of more open-air seating

and can hold up to 18 riders, thus increasing the coaster's capacity.

Rigorous testing, inspections and certifications started up in December 2020, but was halted in the late part of that month due to a repair that needed to be made to the track. Once repaired, the testing began again.

The ride was slated for reopening on February 1. Premier Rides beat its own completion date by a couple of days, allowing the ride to reopen in late January.

This is not the first work Premier has done on this coaster, which was manufactured by **TOGO**. It opened in 1997 as the Manhattan Express.

Premier Rides installed magnetic brakes in 2004. In 2006, Premier replaced the original TOGO trains.

The Big Apple Coaster, measures 203 feet tall with

a track length of more than 4,000 feet. The ride begins with a 180-foot lift and a 76-foot drop, followed by a hill and a 144-foot drop. The train then traverses two inversions, a standard vertical loop and a dive loop (twist and dive element), where the train performs a 180-degree twist and then performs a half-loop maneuver.

The rest of the ride is executed on the roof of the casino, and features small hills and a helix into the brakes.

Currently, the ride costs \$15 per individual ticket (\$20 with virtual reality) and \$8 for a re-ride. A combination regular/VR ride ticket costs \$28 and an all-day pass can be bought for \$26.

The Big Apple Coaster is the only roller coaster by TOGO that still operates in North America.

•premier-rides.com

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2021 NAARSO safety seminar featured in-person classrooms, online options

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

OLDSMAR — The 34th annual **National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials (NAARSO)** safety seminar took place for five days in late January with an added twist this year. Attendees could participate in-person at the **Avanti Palms Resort & Convention Center**, Orlando or, for the first time, participate virtually if they so desired. Attendance was more than 400 with 79 in person and 362 opting for online training. Those online were able to participate concurrently with the in-person instruction or virtually at their leisure up until March 15.

Due to COVID-19 requirements, NAARSO kept 40 instructors and in-person attendees safe by following state and local guidelines. Because of these extra procedures, all classes were offered except for Limited Specialty and Train the Trainer. The instructors are all volunteer and come from throughout the industry. "There were a few vendors and suppliers who presented as well," said **Michael Wood**, NAARSO president. All told, 480 people participated, which is 20 more than the in-person training last year in Myrtle Beach.

Throughout the five-days, 128 classes were available for both primary and secondary inspectors as well as operations and elective classes. Topics covered the full amusement ride spectrum, including OSHA, wire rope inspections, changes in ASTM standards, rigging inspections, understanding weld and NDT certifications, passenger restraints, corrosion analysis, fasteners, blood borne pathogens (BBP), incident investigation and preventative



Among the 40 instructors were Fun Spot U.S.A.'s Frank Hamedl (left) and Kevin Joralemon (right). COURTESY NAARSO

maintenance. There were also classes on specific types of rides and manufacturers as well.

The on-line portion got started last March. The NAARSO education committee was charged with the task of offering an online component for the 2021 training session. Previously, seven classrooms were offered at one time. The committee felt four concurrent classrooms would be something "we could do and do well," said Wood. NAARSO made a substantial investment to have all the necessary equipment to provide this opportunity. **Webex** was contracted to provide the videoconferencing hosting service. To make sure online attendees would be up and running the first day, a continuous loop of a class was fed for them to connect to all day Sunday.

Wood was asked about how the program went. "I thought [it] went well. Obviously, on Day One there were a few speed bumps. Webex did its job and ran almost flawlessly." Most of the issues the first hour were connectivity ones that were easily resolved.

"We catered to our online audience, making sure all had a chance to get their questions answered. No one got left

behind," said Wood. This was accomplished by offering two ways for virtual attendees to communicate. One way was to unmute their computer and ask their question. The second way was via a special e-mail address for each of the four classrooms that online attendees could make use of. "Overall, the students were pleased with everything that happened," said Wood.

"This was a new experience for all of us. We wanted to make learning as good as it possibly could be, for all attendees," said Wood.

Those attendees came from all segments of the industry: portable, amusement parks, jurisdictional inspectors, and third-party inspectors (for fairs or insurance companies). There were two international participants from Singapore and Dubai.

NAARSO has the slogan, "Safety through communication." That communication was evident with the students as they were asked to share their knowledge and expand their networking opportunities. "People gain resources to use throughout the year," said Wood about student

► See NAARSO, page 41



NAARSO president Michael Wood (above left) presented a Seminar Excellence Award to Cynthia Coetzee, who is part of the ride safety team for North American Midway Entertainment. Dave Bartozzi (above right), a free-lance ride inspector, also received the Man of the Year Award from Michael Wood. COURTESY NAARSO





The Intelligent Disinfection Door was an option that more than 70% of the in-person attendees took the opportunity to use. It provided UV light while spraying disinfectant KOC-86 Guard as attendees passed through.
COURTESY NAARSO

►NAARSO

Continued from page 40

take-aways.

Wood sees this first successful split-learning venture as a way to expand and continue to offer the simulcast program, as long as COVID-19 continues and as cost savings measures for attendees. Some of those savings by attending virtually include travel, lodging and food costs.

There were many positive comments received about the training including these two.

"I thought it went very well, and online support when needed was great. Just an awesome job by everyone to pull this together and have it be successful," **Nick Ungaro**, **Valleyfair** maintenance foreman.

"Thank you for the time and work you and NAARSO put into pulling this seminar together. I am sure it has been challenging under the circumstances. I think that the virtual training worked well, but I look forward to being able to attend future seminars in person once we can get back to some form of 'normalcy' which likely will still be different than what it was before the pandemic," said **Jim Hennessey**, Director, general services, **Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom**.

Wood talked about future NAARSO projects: "We hope to expand entry level courses to the Spanish language, with 6,000 Mexican nationals who come to work in the United States." Perhaps someday, NAARSO will offer safety training south of the border. "Safety doesn't stop at the border. We want to spread as far and wide as we can."

•naarso.com

Quassy freshens up Frantic for 2021 season



MIDDLEBURY, Conn. — The maintenance team at Quassy Amusement Park brought seats of the park's popular thrill attraction Frantic — an SBF/Visa Mini Dance Party 360 — back to like-new condition. With all of the work done in-house, the reconditioned seats will be installed and ready for the park's planned April 24 opening. SBF/Visa is represented in the U.S. by Rides 4 U of Somerville, New Jersey. COURTESY QUASSY AMUSEMENT PARK

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Six Flags Fiesta Texas keeps Mardi Gras going with safety protocols

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO — Festivals have become reliable attendance drivers, particularly when placed in the shoulder seasons outside of the daily operational calendar of the summer.

Six Flags Fiesta Texas introduced its Mardi Gras Festival in 2017, and it became a big hit with the park's audience.

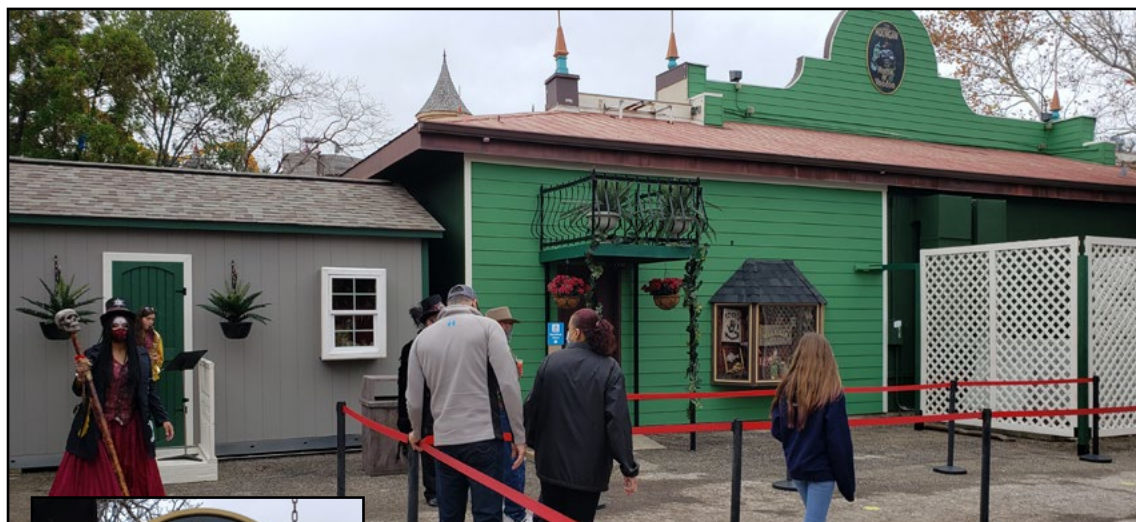
"Beads, beads, beads," Park President Jeffrey Siebert was prone to say. "We can't give them out fast enough."

One of the highlights of the festival is the parade of colorful floats that travel down the streets of Rockville through crowds of park-goers waiting to catch numerous strands of holiday beads. Guests clamored to either be selected to dress in costumes and ride the floats or line the streets to take in the atmosphere and snag a necklace of beads — or two, or five.

In 2019, the park helped anchor its entrance into year-round weekend operation with the festival by moving it up to the months of January and February — to great success. In 2020, Fiesta Texas wrapped up the Mardi Gras event at the close of February, just prior to the impactful results of the coronavirus pandemic.

For its fifth annual edition of the festival, Six Flags had to think outside the box — or in this case, outside the parade. Times had changed.

With the parade being the large focal point of the event, streets lined with crowds shoulder to shoulder, not to mention floats staffed with park guests sharing festive



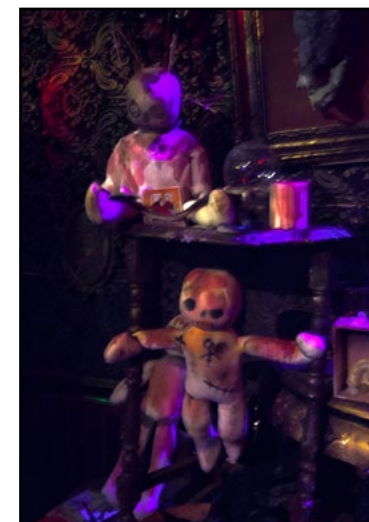
The new House of Voodoo was created for the Mardi Gras event but will also be included into the Fright Fest lineup in the fall. COURTESY JAY JACOBS; SIX FLAGS FIESTA TEXAS

talents at the park to create a New Orleans vibe into a new haunt to be enjoyed in a different part of the year.

"The other safety protocols are from our successful HallowFest event," said Siebert. "For example, candy distribution is now how we are going to manage bead distribution. Our scare actor protocols established last fall are now how we are managing the new House of Voodoo."

For the event, the Fiesta Texas team transformed a back area of the park inhouse into a new area that faces the guest. Admittance to The Houngan House of Voodoo is regulated by a free reservation system in order to maintain social distancing and provide a safe environment for all participants. Also, limited capacity keeps groups separated from others and scare actors are even distanced. Siebert explained where guests and scare actors are close, shields are in place to become safety barriers.

"It will be open for not only Mardi Gras, but the House of Voodoo will reopen

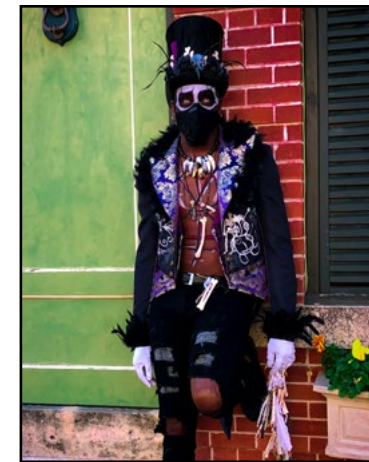


keep people distanced and in an open-air environment.

"This year features more Mardi Gras entertainment than ever before," said Filicko. "The showtimes and additional show locations naturally keep the guests spread through the park and entertained at every turn."

All guests and staff continue to wear masks in the park.

The Mardi Gras Festival ran through seven weekends in January and February, concluding on February 28. Spring break marketing takes over in March.



A variety of Cajun specialties awaited guests (above left). This masked voodoo character inhabited the park outside the New Orleans haunt (above right). COURTESY SIX FLAGS FIESTA TEXAS

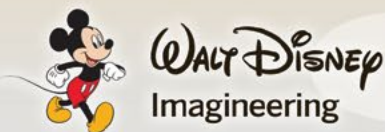


Outdoor kiosks provide culinary Cajun specialties for the event (above middle). Pop-up cavalcades at Six Flags Fiesta Texas still offer the fun of catching beads during the Mardi Gras event but without gathered crowds (above left). The park offered more outdoor entertainment than ever before for the seasonal event (above right). COURTESY SIX FLAGS FIESTA TEXAS

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Theme parks help to distribute COVID-19 vaccine safely, quickly

UNITED STATES — The COVID-19 pandemic saw theme parks and amusement parks across the country pivot on how they welcomed guests, handled crowds and operated the business of fun throughout 2020. In 2021, parks are actively becoming part of the solution to bringing back some normalcy to the upcoming seasons.

As more COVID-19 vaccines become available, new mega sites for vaccination are popping up across the country and theme parks are quickly adapting their infrastructure to help accommodate the need.

For the past 24 years the parking lot of Allentown, Pennsylvania's **Dorney Park** has served as the Lehigh Valley's location for drive-thru flu vaccine clinic. With only two weeks to prepare, there was a lot of quick thought and implementation that went into converting Dorney Park's parking lot into a mass vaccination site for COVID-19.

It wasn't the typical drive-thru flu vaccine — this is the COVID-19 vaccine which required additional compo-



Dorney Park's parking lot was transformed into a drive-thru vaccination site to help distribute COVID-19 vaccines to the public. COURTESY DORNEY PARK

nents. Unlike a typical flu vaccine (patients drive up, get the shot and go on their way), LVHN needed to implement a 15- to 30-minute holding area in order to observe and monitor patients for any post-vaccine symptoms and easy exit routes for those who didn't have an appointment.

With nurses and doctors present, operationally the vaccine clinic is on a 100% volunteer basis, many of which came from Dorney Park's full-time staff.

Six Flags America began operating as a mass COVID-

19 vaccination site in early February. The design of the park's site allows for the park to continue to distribute vaccines even after the theme park itself opens to the public in March.

"It's just an overflow parking lot, and the great thing about it is it has its own street access," said Six Flags spokesman **Joe Pudlick**. People arriving for coronavirus vaccination shots will line up in a parking lot west of the amusement park. "There's plenty of signage out there to direct folks directly to the vaccination site, but there will be some

additional signage added to direct people specifically to the theme park as well."

Disney announced in January that it would turn part of its Anaheim, California, **Disneyland** resort into a mass-vaccination site. The Toy Story parking lot began serving up coronavirus vaccinations on Jan. 14 as Orange County's first point-of-dispensing supersite. Essential workers and people over 70 years old were among the first group offered vaccines at the theme park. On the night before the site began operat-

ing, 10,000 people signed up to receive vaccines, causing the county's website to crash.

On the company's first-quarter earnings call, Disney CEO **Bob Chapek** announced that (to date) more than 100,000 vaccine doses have been administered at Disneyland.

With Southern California being hit hard by the pandemic — it's reported that Los Angeles has recorded more cases and deaths than any other county in the U.S., a majority of which occurred during the last two months — other theme parks are also stepping in to help.

Six Flags Magic Mountain began operation as a mass vaccination site on January 20. Cars lined up outside the theme park, which now hosts the latest mega-POD (Point of Dispensing) in all of LA County.

On its first day, the Six Flags Magic Mountain site distributed more than 2,400 vaccines. "We're hoping to ramp up vaccinations to up to 4,000 a day," said **Marco Rodriguez**, spokesperson for the **Los Angeles County Fire Department**.

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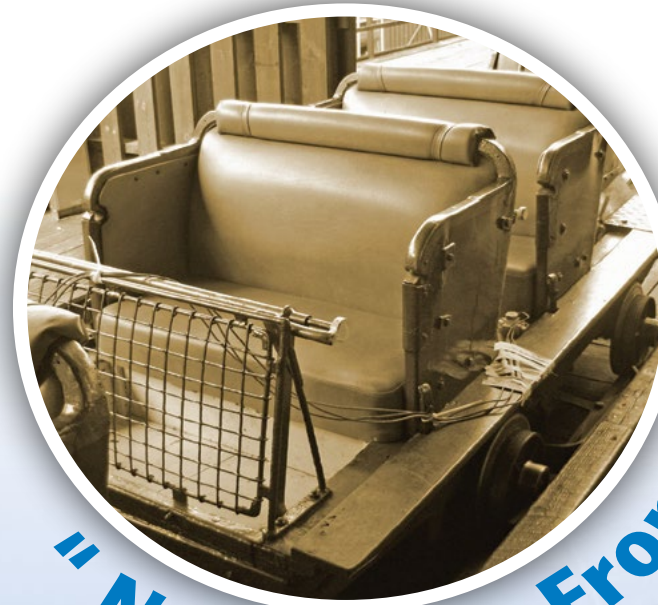
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BREAKING NEWS

NEAAPA, Governor Cuomo develop COVID-19 safety for New York parks

NEW YORK — Due to COVID-19, all amusement facilities in the state of New York have been shuttered since the end of the 2019 season. The **New England Association of Amusement Park** (NEAAPA) announced that it achieved success in working with **Governor Andrew Cuomo's** office, its New York members and the government relations and legal firm of **Davidoff Hutter and Citron LLP** (DHC). On February 17, Cuomo officially announced that New York's outdoor amusement and water parks will be open for the 2021 season.

"We are pleased to have been able to work with the governor's administration on getting this accomplished before the traditional start of the season," said **Eric Anderson**, president of NEAAPA. "It will be great to see our members operating again."

NEAAPA worked closely with its members, most notably **Adventureland**, **Adventurer's Amusement Park**, **Central Amusements International** (Luna Park), **Deno's Wonder Wheel Park**, **Ride Entertainment**, **High Mountain Enterprises**, **International Ride Training**, and **DHC**.

NEAAPA had previously developed CDC-compliant safety protocols to open almost all amusement parks throughout the New England States, and had worked cooperatively with New Jersey, Pennsylvania and **IAAPA** in developing protocols and safety measures.

Spotlighting industry leaders, Embed celebrates International Women's Day

SINGAPORE — March 8 marks International Women's Day: a global day celebrating the social, economic and political achievements of women. Given what the world has been through in 2020, **Embed** is celebrating the courage, strength, grit and determination of women who have hustled hard to not only survive the year, but thrive. Many industry colleagues and partners worked from home, multi-tasking work while helping kids with remote learning, taking care of ailing family members and aging parents. Many even contracted COVID and overcame it.

"At Embed, we believe in the value of diversity in our talent pool," said **Kathleen Goy**, Embed's global head of events. "We have a shared commitment to gender parity at all levels of an organization because

we believe in the boundless strength (intellectual, leadership, cultural and commercial strength) that results from harnessing and realizing the talent capital of gender equality.

"We take great pride in not only being gender equal, but putting an end to gender inequality in our tech sector. With a Chief Executive Leadership team made up of 50% women, led by a female CEO [**Renee Welsh**], we are proud to be an example of what other companies, large and small, aspire to achieve."

Despite the pandemic, Embed remained operational, not only assisting clients but helping to guide the industry as a whole through the pandemic. The company has done a series of Women@Embed videos — with a cross-section of leaders from various industries —

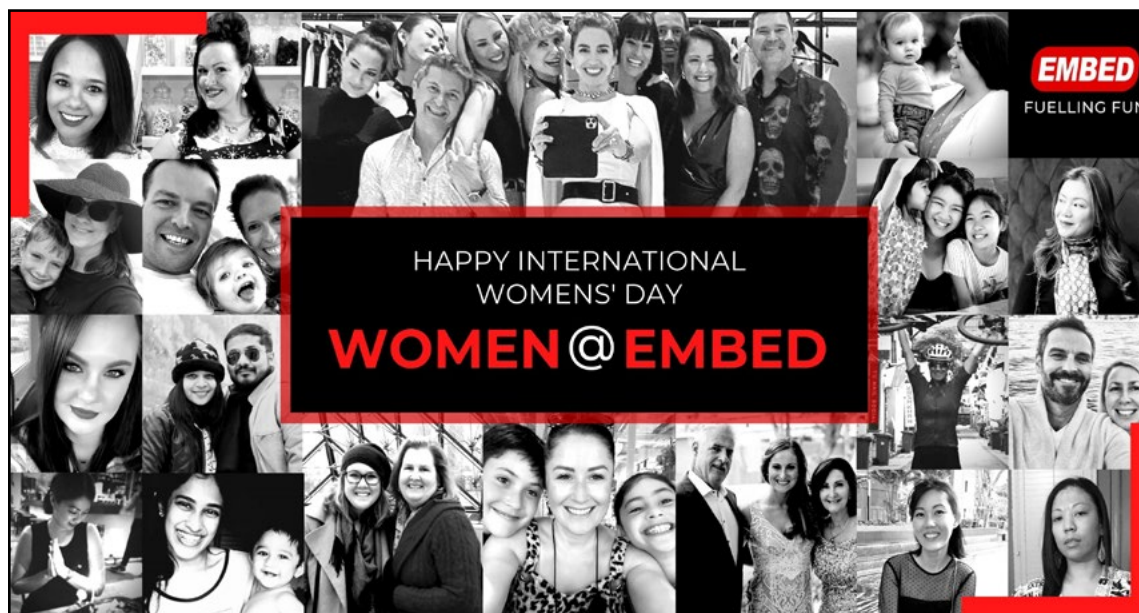
sharing their life stories, their professional journeys, life-hacks and secrets to success.

"These acts of professional generosity were done with the intent of illuminating anyone watching, who might benefit from the gift of their example," stated Goy.

"Embed celebrates International Women's Day because if we learned anything in 2020 it is that tough times don't last, but tough people do," said **Sara Paz**, chief marketing officer for Embed. "Therefore, 2021 International Women's Day Women@Embed campaign features women from our industry and what fueled their resilience and strength to get through 2020."

The Women@Embed videos can be viewed at Embed's YouTube channel or via its website beginning March 8.

• embedcard.com



On International Women's Day, Embed is releasing a series of videos entitled Women@Embed. The series celebrates women throughout the industry and spotlights their resilience throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. COURTESY EMBED



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